

Craniopharyngioma - Childhood - About Clinical Trials [1]

This section has been reviewed and approved by the [Cancer.Net Editorial Board \[2\]](#), 04/2014

ON THIS PAGE: You will learn more about clinical trials, which are the main way that new medical approaches are tested to see how well they work. To see other pages, use the menu on the side of your screen.

Doctors and scientists are always looking for better ways to treat children with a brain tumor. To make scientific advances, doctors develop research studies involving volunteers, called clinical trials.

Many clinical trials are focused on new treatments, evaluating whether a new treatment is safe, effective, and possibly better than the current (standard) treatment. These types of studies evaluate new drugs, different combinations of existing treatments, new approaches to radiation therapy or surgery, and new methods of treatment.

Children who participate in clinical trials are often among the first to receive new treatments before they are widely available. However, there is no guarantee that the new treatment will be safe, effective, or better than the standard treatment.

There are also clinical trials that study new ways to ease symptoms and side effects during treatment and manage the late effects that may occur after treatment. Talk with your child's doctor about clinical trials regarding side effects.

Patients decide to participate in clinical trials for many reasons. Because standard treatments are not perfect, patients are often willing to face the added uncertainty of a clinical trial in the hope of a better result. Other patients volunteer for clinical trials because they know that these studies are the only way to make progress in treating craniopharyngioma. Even if they do not benefit directly from the clinical trial, their participation may benefit future children with craniopharyngioma.

Most children with craniopharyngioma do not receive treatment in clinical trials if the surgeon can remove all of tumor or if their age and tumor size does not limit the use of radiation therapy. Generally, clinical trials provide treatment options when a tumor cannot be surgically removed, for those who want to delay or avoid radiation therapy, or for those with tumors that have grown back after surgery and/or radiation therapy.

To join a clinical trial, parents and children must participate in a process known as informed consent. During informed consent, the doctor should list all of the patient's options, so that the person understands how the new treatment differs from the standard treatment. The doctor must also list all of the risks of the new treatment, which may or may not be different from the risks of standard treatment. Finally, the doctor must explain what will be required of each patient in order to participate in the clinical trial, including the number of doctor visits, tests, and the schedule of treatment.

For specific topics being studied for craniopharyngioma, learn more in the [Latest Research](#) [3] section.

Patients who participate in a clinical trial may stop participating at any time for any personal or medical reason. This may include that the new treatment is not working or there are serious side effects. Clinical trials are also closely monitored by experts who watch for any problems with each study. It is important that parents of patients participating in a clinical trial talk with their doctor and researchers about who will be providing their treatment and care during the clinical trial, after the clinical trial ends, and/or if the patient chooses to leave the clinical trial before it ends.

Cancer.Net offers a lot of information about clinical trials in other areas of the website, including a [complete section on clinical trials](#) [4] and [places to search for clinical trials for a specific type of tumor](#) [5].

The next section helps explain the areas of research going on today about craniopharyngioma. Use the menu on the side of your screen to select Latest Research, or you can select another section, to continue reading this guide.

Links:

[1] <http://www.cancer.net/cancer-types/craniopharyngioma-childhood/about-clinical-trials>

[2] <http://www.cancer.net/about-us>

[3] <http://www.cancer.net/node/18727>

[4] <http://www.cancer.net/node/24863>

[5] <http://www.cancer.net/node/24878>