

# Should You do it for the Money?

**M**oney is tight and everyone feels the crunch. Amid lost jobs and mounting bills, more folks are tempted to take part in clinical trials to earn extra income.

Although many clinical trials offer money compensation, it's vital to remember that a trial is not a substitute for a job. Before rushing to sign up just because the money is appealing, you need to assess the pros and cons.

Education before participation is crucial. It's important to evaluate each trial to make sure you fully understand the potential benefits and risks, and are clear about what's involved.

If money is your sole motivation, you may neglect to ask the right questions in order to find out all the details you need to know. Anyone considering clinical trials should be completely knowledgeable about all aspects of what they're going into.

Some people mistakenly believe that it's a snap to get into a clinical trial. However, the restrictions for being in a particular trial are usually very precise. Many people who think they'll participate to pick up easy cash may not qualify for a local trial.

## Compensation varies with the trial

Still, the payment offered to volunteers may seem tempting. According to The Tufts Center for the Study of Drug Development, which reviewed 6,000 clinical trials conducted between 2001 and 2007, an average of 64 percent of studies offer monetary compensation to volunteers. Eight-five percent of Phase I studies, in which drugs are tested for the first time on healthy volunteers, offer compensation, while slightly more than 50 percent of Phase II and III studies provide monetary compensation. In Phase II studies, drugs are tested for safety in a larger number of healthy volunteers and in Phase III studies, drugs are tested on large groups of people to learn about the effectiveness and side effects.

Compensation exists to recognize the patient's effort, and to make participating acceptable for those who fear that a clinical trial might cost them money. For example, a volunteer may need to keep a daily log of symptoms or treatments, or may have to travel some distance to the test site.

On average, Phase I trials offer the highest compensation to volunteers. These trials, which test safety and dosage in a small number of



## 15 Key Questions to Ask About a Clinical Trial

1. What is the purpose of the study?
2. Who will be in the study?
3. Why do researchers believe the treatment being tested may be effective?
4. What kind of tests and treatments are involved?
5. How do the possible risks, side effects and benefits in the study compare with my current treatment?
6. How could the trial affect my daily life?
7. How long will the trial last?
8. Will I have to stay in the hospital?
9. Who will pay for the treatment? Will I be reimbursed for other expenses?
10. What type of long term follow-up care is part of this study?
11. How will I know that the treatment is working?
12. Will results of the trials be available?
13. Who will be in charge of my care?
14. Can I leave a trial after it has started?
15. Might I get a placebo?

people, compensate an average of \$1,968 per volunteer, across all disease areas. Phase IV studies offer the lowest average compensation per volunteer: approximately \$400 (across all disease categories). There's some indication that most people who sign up for clinical trials for money are going into Phase I or II trials, which test safety and appropriate dosage on healthy adults.

Compensation also varies by therapeutic area. The highest amounts are offered for cardiovascular disease, neurology, endocrine, gastrointestinal, and blood disorders. Most studies provide free study medication and study related medical tests, as well as reimbursement for study related expenses.