



What's the Follow-Up Plan After a Clinical Trial?

Richard L. Schilsky, MD, FACP, FASCO, FSCT
Senior Vice President and Chief Medical Officer
ASCO

Mel Mann, MBA, M.Ed
Patient Advocate, Longest Living #Gleevec Survivor

Please remember the opinions expressed on Patient Power are not necessarily the views of our sponsors, contributors, partners or Patient Power. Our discussions are not a substitute for seeking medical advice or care from your own doctor. That's how you'll get care that's most appropriate for you.

Andrew Schorr:

Okay. Here's some questions we've been getting in. Kaitlin wrote in, Mel, she wants to know, do you still participate in follow-up activities related to the trial you were in? So tell us about your participation and sort of follow-up.

Mel Mann:

My follow-up is I go out to MD Anderson twice a year, and it's just a one-day, one-hour doctor visit where they take the blood work and they check and see if everything's stable. And then when I'm back home, twice a year I have my blood work checked back at home, and that's the extent of the follow-up. I still have to take medication, one pill a day.

Andrew Schorr:

Right. And is that still covered by the trial?

Mel Mann:

Well, it's covered by the trial, but my insurance also covers it. I did imatinib (Gleevec) for life because of the trial.

Andrew Schorr:

Okay. Dr. Schilsky, let me just ask you, is that a benefit typically of trials? Like with these oral cancer medicines—which you know can be so expensive—if you're in a trial for one, do you get it for life or an extended time or how does that work?

Dr. Schilsky:

Depends a little bit on the trial and the sponsor for the trial, but the one thing for sure is when you're on a trial whatever the investigational drug is, whatever is being researched, that's provided for free. And any testing that would be considered to be for research purposes is provided by free—for free. So that's a benefit of participating in the trial.

Typically the drugs continue to be provided for free for as long as the patient continues to benefit. Now, sometimes if the drug ultimately gets FDA approved, then it may be necessary at some time in the future for a patient to switch over from the research drug to the commercial drug, but of course at that time the drug is FDA approved. And if the person has insurance, it will generally be covered by their insurance.

Please remember the opinions expressed on Patient Power are not necessarily the views of our sponsors, contributors, partners or Patient Power. Our discussions are not a substitute for seeking medical advice or care from your own doctor. That's how you'll get care that's most appropriate for you.