Interested in Volunteering for a Research Study?
Here Are Some Things to Consider…

The Basics of How Research Works

1. Researchers look for ways to improve our lives and ask questions about how things can be better.
2. They design research studies to answer these questions.
3. The researchers invite volunteers to participate in their studies in different ways.
4. Researchers then collect data from volunteers’ participation to answer the questions.
5. This is how research advances knowledge and helps improve our health.

Examples of How Research Has Led to Important Advancements:
- New cancer treatments
- Artificial limbs and prosthetics
- Addiction treatment programs
- Mindfulness programs for pain relief

A Partnership Between Researchers and Participants

- We all rely on research to find ways to improve our lives.
- Research studies need people to volunteer to find answers to questions that matter to us.
- Participation in research helps to advance knowledge and improve our health, but volunteering for a study is not for everyone; it is a personal choice.
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Here’s What to Think About Before Volunteering…

What questions do researchers want to answer in this research study?
This tells you the reason for the study and whether it is something that matters to you.

Why are you being asked to participate?
This tells you how the study could be relevant to you, your condition, or your experience.

What will you have to do in the study?
This would help you consider the impact, effort, time, cost, and other burdens on you if you participate.

What’s in it for you if you participate?
This tells you what you might gain from participation. For example, a chance to test if a new drug works, participate in a fun experiment, contribute to the understanding of how our body works and feel good about being able to help make things better by advancing science.

What are some reasons for you not to participate?
This could help you understand the drawbacks of participation, including risks you may experience and how participation may affect you in other undesirable ways.

What if you decide not to participate, what could that mean for you?
This could help you understand if there are other options or opportunities that may matter to you.

Want to Know More About Research Participation?
Access a library of information to help you decide! Resources are also available in Spanish!

— Watch short informational videos
— Learn about why we have regulations to protect research participants
— Print a list of questions to ask the research team

Visit our website at www.hhs.gov/About-Research-Participation or scan the QR code.

For questions about this brochure, contact:
The Office for Human Research Protections
Toll free (866) 447-4777
Email: OHRP-EDU@hhs.gov
Website: www.hhs.gov/ohrp/

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