

Essential Information You May Not Know

Sometimes a Principal Investigator or a Sub-Investigator may have a conflict of interest, or situation in which a financial or other non-financial/personal situation has the potential to compromise professional judgment in conducting the research. The most common conflict of interest is financial. The Principal Investigator may own stock or be a paid consultant. He/she may also hold a patent on the drug or medical device being studied, and in that case, the Principal Investigator would benefit if it was approved for general use. When a conflict of interest is identified, every effort is made to minimize the potential it has to influence research outcomes.

Another conflict may occur when employees of a research facility participate in a study at the facility. This could lead to problems because as employees, they may feel pressure to participate in order to avoid negative effects on their employment. Likewise, they may feel unduly influenced to participate due to their perception or expectation of a job promotion in exchange for study participation. When a participant feels pressured to participate for any reason other than his/her own best interests, it is called coercion. Coercion can compromise a participant's capacity to make an autonomous decision regarding study participation.

It is possible that a research participant may have to pay for some or all of the tests that are related to the research. Your insurance company may cover some or all of the costs, but there are some health insurance companies that do not provide coverage for research studies. **This should be discussed with your health insurance company before you enter the research study.**

On the other hand, participants may be reimbursed or compensated for participating in a research study. For individuals with medical problems, the amount of compensation is generally based on how inconvenient it is for them to come to the research facility. Studies that enroll healthy participants generally offer a larger incentive, as these individuals do not have any medical problems and there is no direct benefit to their health.

It is important to know that individual participants' names will remain confidential and will not be mentioned in study reports. When a study participant enrolls in a research study, he/she may be given a privacy/confidentiality (HIPAA) form to sign in addition to the main consent form. This allows the Principal Investigator to share and use the participant's health information for research purposes. If you, as the study participant, decide that you no longer wish to have your protected health information (PHI) shared, you may withdraw at any time. This withdrawal must be submitted in writing to the Principal Investigator. However, once you do so, you can no longer continue to participate in the study.