How is My Pet Protected While in a Study?

Clinical studies generally fall into two categories: clinical trials and observational studies. Clinical trials include testing of new medications and treatments that may improve health and recovery from the condition being studied. Observational studies may review patients’ responses to normal care or may involve collecting samples from healthy dogs for comparison to non-healthy individuals.

Prior to enrolling one’s pet in a clinical study, clients receive a printed copy of an Informed Consent document. This document must be written in easily understood language. It contains information about the research, the treatment (medication, procedure, etc.) being investigated and any potential benefits or risks. Other information includes the duration of the study, alternate procedures or treatments (if applicable) and any compensation. Finally, Informed Consent documents provide the ability to remove one’s pet from a study at any time for any reason.

Other protections for animals enrolled in clinical studies include the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) review of the study prior to its approval and funding. The IACUC assures the study meets the requirements of the animal welfare laws of the National Institutes of Health (NIH). Stringent oversight by the IACUC ensures the study protocol is appropriate for the condition being investigated and all risks are minimized.

During a study, clinicians, residents and technicians continuously monitor the patients. They assess the patient for improvement or ill effects from the treatment or procedure being investigated. Care providers strictly adhere to all standard of care requirements. If a patient shows stress, illness or side effects, it may be recommended to withdraw the pet from the study.

Clients always have the option to remove their pet from a study, for any reason, without consequences to the patient’s care. Great information on clinical studies can be found at the American Veterinary Medical Association’s Animal Health Studies Database website: ebusiness.avma.org/ahsdsd/more_info.aspx

For more information, please visit our website: uwveterinarycare.wisc.edu/clinical studies