UNDERSTANDING CLINICAL TRIALS (OLDER KIDS)
Dear Reader

This book is intended to help you understand clinical trials and what you might experience if you decide to join one.

MEET THE CHARACTERS

JUAN, FINN and IRIS
The stars of this book
GOOD MORNING, STUDENTS!

I'M FINN! AND I'M IRIS!

AND THIS IS OUR NEW SEGMENT, KNOWLEDGE IS POWER

LAST WEEK, WE ASKED YOU TO EMAIL US TOPICS YOU WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT...
...and email after email asked us the same thing, what is a clinical trial?

Juan has given us his permission to be featured in this news story. Of course, if you don’t want to broadcast participation in a clinical trial, keeping it private is fine, too!

And we’re not surprised! We’ve all heard how our star striker, Juan, has joined a clinical trial and has had to miss some classes and even a few practices as a result.

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But none of us, not even most of the teachers, know what a clinical trial is!

Well, we did some research, talked to a few doctors, and are going to teach you all about clinical trials!
We all know doctors and researchers are working all the time to discover new ways to prevent, detect, and treat medical conditions.

But have you ever stopped to wonder what happens after they discover these new treatments?

These tests are all part of a preclinical trial where experiments are done in test tubes and in animals to make sure the new discoveries work and are safe.

You may think as soon as they discover a new treatment, researchers give each other high fives and send the treatment off to pharmacies and hospitals, but you’d be wrong! Discovering the treatment is just the beginning! First, all new treatments are tested in labs!
The most promising discoveries are then tested in clinical trials...

...where new treatments go from being tested in the lab to being tested with... you guessed it... people!

Clinical trials help doctors and researchers answer specific questions about new treatments. The big two being: is the new treatment safe when used in people, and how well does it work?

Clinical trials are an important step for getting medical breakthroughs to the people who need them all over the world.
Every clinical trial is carried out on a group of similar people with the same medical condition. And many of these trials even involve people from all over the world! Pretty cool, huh?

Although most clinical trials involve adults, some involve kids and teens. Why? Because our bodies are different than adults’ bodies! Diseases and treatments affect kids and teens differently, which is why doctors need to make sure that a new treatment that works in adults, works just as well for us!

There are four different clinical trial phases.

1. There are four different clinical trial phases.
2. Each phase helps researchers and doctors learn more about how a new treatment works in people, and we’re about to count them down!
Phase 1 trials test a new treatment in a small group of people for the first time - either healthy volunteers or a group of people with the same disease - to see if it’s safe.

Now, Phase 2 trials are a lot like Phase 1 except they happen in a larger group of people who all have the same disease. These trials investigate how well the treatment works and monitor for any side effects or unwanted reactions.

Phase 3 is typically when researchers not only add even more people to the trial, but this is where they also add kids and teens.

Again, what they’re looking for is that the new treatment works and is safe!
Phase 4 trials keep track of how safe and effective a new treatment is once it’s available for doctors to prescribe to the people who need it!

Now, some clinical trials compare a new treatment with a control, which may either be a treatment that doctors already use or a placebo.

A placebo is an inactive substance that contains no medicine.
You may be wondering how’d you know if you were getting the treatment or a placebo? Well, the answer is, you won’t!

Trial participants are picked at random to receive either the new treatment or the control, so you won’t know which one you received. This is to ensure that the trial is fair.

In some clinical trials, all participants will receive the new treatment. This can happen when no other effective treatment is available for people with serious illnesses.

Now, you’re probably wondering how long a trial lasts, right? Well, some are as short as a few months... but others can last a few years!
After that, you need to have a good old fashioned family meeting and discuss with your parents if you want to participate.

Also, if you decide to withdraw from the trial at any time, this won't affect your medical care.

Be sure to ask as many questions as you want to help you understand what you are volunteering for!

So, let's say you decide “Hey, being in a clinical trial sounds okay! I want to help science! How do I sign up?”

If that’s the case, you should talk to your doctor! He’ll give you all the details and tell you what to expect.

To participate, you’ll need to give your permission, which is called your assent. Your parents will also need to give their permission. This is called informed consent.
Before starting a trial, you may have a physical exam and some tests, like blood tests or scans, to see if you are eligible to participate.

If you join the trial, you may be asked to fill out questionnaires about your health or keep a diary about how you feel.

During the trial, you’re going to have a team of doctors, nurses, and other health care professionals keeping a close eye on you to see how you’re doing. They’ve got your back!

You’ll also have several check-ups, and possibly more blood tests or scans throughout the trial, just to make sure you’re doing okay!
Now, there are a few more things you should understand about participating in a clinical trial.

Having regular check-ups can take time away from already busy schedules.

Just look at our boy, Juan. He’s had to miss school, miss practices, and even miss a few parties!

Another thing you need to look out for are side effects you may get from the treatment. If you feel unwell, be sure to let your doctor know right away!

Something else you need to know - you can stop the trial at any time! Just let your doctor know.
Being in a clinical trial helps medical researchers discover better treatments for people.

While being part of the trial, you may receive reimbursement or items like a backpack or water bottle to help you navigate through it.

Here’s what Juan wanted us to share with you: “I’m glad I’m participating in this clinical trial. It may help me, and what is learned will help other kids like me.”

Well, students, I’m Finn!

And I’m Iris!

And now you’ve got the clinical trials knowledge!
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