ResearchMatch brings volunteers, researchers together: NetWellness

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By Special to The Plain Dealer

ResearchMatch is a secure, convenient and free registry that brings volunteers and researchers together. By setting up your profile online, you can be matched with researchers who are searching for appropriate volunteers to be placed in their research studies.

ResearchMatch notifies you when a possible match has been made, giving you the chance to learn more about the study and to decide if you want to take part.

Research touches everyone

The health of millions has been improved because of those who volunteer their time to take part in research studies. Study volunteers make a profound gift to science, working collaboratively with researchers in improving public health.
It is very likely that each of us has benefited from the results of a research study, even if we weren't directly involved. All current medications and treatments were at one time part of clinical testing with study volunteers. What is now considered medical knowledge exists only because everyday people enrolled in studies. Without research and the volunteers who participate in studies, we would have none of the knowledge needed to protect against and treat disease.

**Getting involved**

Recent surveys show that very few Americans (less than 5 percent) know where to find information about relevant research studies. Research volunteers change the future of medicine, and ResearchMatch is a way to become one of those volunteers. Registering on ResearchMatch has some similarities to posting a resume online, allowing employers to look for candidates to fill positions in their companies. Information posted to your ResearchMatch profile is searchable, allowing researchers to look for participants who may be good candidates for their study.

**Is my information kept private?**

ResearchMatch respects your privacy and takes privacy very seriously. Your personal information will be transmitted and stored in a secure system. Researchers may only view the non-identifiable information (such as age, gender, race, medical, etc.) that you choose to post to your profile. All identifying and contact information including your name, address, phone number and email is kept confidential until you choose to release it to the researcher. All messages from researchers are routed through the site until you choose to release your contact information. You are in control.

Please see the ResearchMatch Privacy Statement for more details.

**Who can sign up?**

Everyone should consider registering on ResearchMatch. Anyone from the United States can join, and all ages and backgrounds are welcome. A parent, legal guardian, or caretaker may register someone who is under the age of 19 or an adult who may not be able to enter in their own information.

**I'm healthy, so why should I sign up?**

There are many types of studies looking for a variety of volunteers, including healthy volunteers. Some studies are observational in nature and are looking for a large number of participants who represent the general population who may or may not be affected by a specific condition or
disease. So a healthy person can make as significant a contribution to research as any person with a specific condition.

**What are the benefits?**

Some benefits of registration on ResearchMatch may include:

- Reducing the time spent searching for research studies for which you qualify;
- Improving the chances of matching you with research studies that interest you;
- Learning more about the research in your community or in your area of interest; and,
- Helping to improve the positive health impacts of future research for everyone.

**What are the different types of studies?**

**Observational** -- These studies are looking for a large number of participants who represent the general population who may or may not be affected by a specific condition or disease. These studies will not ask participants to test any new treatments.

**Treatment** -- These studies may have volunteers test new treatments, combinations of drugs, or new approaches to surgery or therapy.

**Diagnostic** -- These studies are conducted to find a better way to diagnose a specific condition.

**Screening** -- These studies test the best way to detect certain diseases or health conditions.

*Remember that healthy volunteers and those with certain medical conditions are important to research, so don't hesitate to get involved.*

**How do I register?**

Visit the registration page and follow the prompts. You'll be asked to answer a few basic questions and create a username and ID. Optionally, you can provide some additional information about your medical history that will help researchers find the studies that are best suited to your profile.