To report a complaint, concern, or violation visit oprs.usc.edu/complaints
You can also contact the offices listed below.

Office for the Protection of Research Subjects (OPRS)
3720 South Flower Street 325
Los Angeles, CA 90089
(213)-821-1154
oprs@usc.edu

USC Institutional Review Board
1640 Marengo Street, Suite 700
Los Angeles, CA 90033
(323)-442-0114
irb@usc.edu
oprs.usc.edu

For copies of this brochure contact
oprs@usc.edu

Adapted from the Department of Veterans Affairs' Office of Research Compliance & Assurance “I'm a veteran. Should I participate in research?”, and the University of Iowa Human Subjects Office “So you're thinking about being in a research study.” http://research.uiowa.edu/ht/docs/brochureforpublic.pdf
Who reviews a study?
At USC, all studies with human subjects are reviewed by an Institutional Review Board (IRB) before they are allowed to begin.

What is an IRB?
The IRB’s committee is charged with protecting the rights and welfare of the subjects in a study. An IRB is a composed of scientists and non-scientists who review projects submitted by researchers. The University of Southern California has four IRBs; one on the University Park Campus, and three on the Health Sciences Campus.

Who will see my records?
The information in your research record will be confidential. Information will only be given to researchers who carry out the study or to those who make sure the study is safe and carried out the way it was planned.

Are there any special rules to help protect certain subjects?
Children, pregnant women, and prisoners can all be participants in research studies, but are considered potentially “vulnerable populations.” There are special rules to protect participants who are in one of these groups.

What kinds of procedures are involved?
Research studies can involve a variety of activities, from filling out surveys and questionnaires to taking experimental medicines or using experimental devices. Some research studies last only a few minutes, while others last for several years. The research team will describe all the research activities before you agree to be in the study.

What is informed consent?
Informed consent is the process of learning the key facts about a research study before you decide whether or not to participate. Your participation should be based on a clear understanding of what will take place in the study and how it might affect you. The consent process begins when the research staff explains to you the facts about the study. The research staff will assist you with the “informed consent form” that has these facts so you can decide whether or not you want to take part in the study. These facts include details about the study, tests, or procedures, and the benefits and risks that could result. Alternatives to participating will be discussed should you decided not to participate, and as your will rights as a research volunteer.

What questions should I ask before I agree to take part in a research study?
Before you decide to participate in a research study, you need to know as much as possible about it. If you have any concerns, be sure to ask questions. The following is a list of important questions.

Not every question applies to every study. You have every right to get answers.

- Will I benefit from this study?
- What is the main purpose of this study?
- Will this research help me to understand my condition? If so, how?
- Will I be able to see my own doctor?
- What alternatives are available if I decide not to participate in the study?
- Is it possible that I will receive only a placebo (inactive substance)?
- What risks are involved in this study?
- How long is the study going to last and what will I be asked to do as a participant?
- What will happen to specimens I give?
- Who has reviewed/approved this study?
- If I have a condition, could it get worse during the study?
- Do I have to pay for any part of this study?
- Will I be paid to be in this study?
- If I decide to participate in this study, how will it affect my daily life?
- Will I receive any follow-up care after the study has ended?
- Will I be told the results of the study?
- Can anyone find out whether I’m participating in the study?
- How do I end my participation in this study if I change my mind?
- Whom do I contact for questions and information about the study?
- If the treatment works for me, can I keep using it after the study?

Where can I find health and research information?

USC Human Subjects Information
http://oprs.usc.edu/about/being-a-participant-in-research/

ClinicalTrials.Gov
Info about federally and privately funded research: www.clinicaltrials.gov

CenterWatch
Database of industry-sponsored international clinical trials: www.centerwatch.com

Family Doctor
Health info from the American Academy of Family Physicians: www.familydoctor.org

Healthfinder
A health library available in English and Spanish: www.healthfinder.gov

Medline Plus
The National Library of Medicine’s complete health info portal: http://medlineplus.gov

National Cancer Institute
Clinical details about every type of cancer and the latest treatments: www.cancer.gov