

Study: Cancer survivors not getting needed tests

June 1 2009, By MARILYNN MARCHIONE , AP Medical Writer

(AP) -- New research finds that people who had radiation treatments for cancer as children are less likely than the general public or even their healthy siblings to get recommended screening tests.

Doctors say that less than half of the cancer survivors in their study received [mammograms](#), colonoscopies or other screenings as often as advised.

Some people may avoid screening tests because they want to put the scary experience of having had cancer behind them.

However, "many survivors do not know the specific treatments they had," let alone what the follow-up tests should be done, said Dr. Paul Nathan, a cancer specialist at the Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto. He led the study and gave results Monday at an American Society of Clinical [Oncology](#) meeting in Florida.

More than 11 million Americans are cancer survivors, including more than 325,000 who were diagnosed when they were 15 or younger.

Cancer survivors are at higher risk of developing second cancers later in life, because treatments like radiation raise this chance, and because of [genetic factors](#) that led to the disease in the first place.

Researchers used several government-sponsored studies to compare screening behaviors among 8,318 cancer survivors in the United States

and Canada, more than 2,660 of their siblings, and 8,318 healthy people from the general population.

Of the cancer survivors who were at increased risk for a second cancer because of childhood radiation treatments, less than 12 percent were getting colonoscopies every five years, as recommended for survivors. Only 46 percent had had a mammogram within the previous two years, and only 27 percent had had a complete skin exam for [skin cancer](#), the most common radiation-linked cancer in survivors.

On the Net:

Cancer meeting: <http://www.asco.org>

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