

# Researchers examine health behaviors after childhood cancer diagnosis

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In a *Psycho-Oncology* study of childhood cancer survivors, several health behaviors fell short of expectations for exercise and diet during early survivorship, and they remained sub-optimal upon reaching five years post-diagnosis.

The study followed families of children with cancer (ages 5-17 at recruitment) from diagnosis through five years. Three years and five years post-diagnosis, 82 survivors and 103 mothers of survivors completed questionnaires assessing [exercise](#), dietary, and sleep patterns among survivors.

At three- and five-years post-diagnosis, mothers' and survivors' responses indicated that few survivors engaged in appropriate levels of low-intensity exercise, fruit/vegetable intake, and dairy consumption; however, most survivors engaged in recommended levels of high intensity exercise, fast food restriction, and sleep. Higher income was associated with decreased intake of [fast food](#) over time, whereas lower income was associated with increased intake.

"Childhood cancer survivors are at elevated risk for a multitude of conditions later in life, and greater engagement in healthy habits may be particularly important for this population," said lead author Rachel Fisher, of Nationwide Children's Hospital, in Columbus. "These findings emphasize that there is much work to be done to ensure that these survivors enjoy full, healthy lives."

**More information:** Rachel S. Fisher et al, Trajectories of health behaviors across early childhood cancer survivorship, *Psycho-Oncology* (2018). [DOI: 10.1002/pon.4911](https://doi.org/10.1002/pon.4911)

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