

Barriers to Health Behaviors Among Adolescent and Young Adult Survivors of Pediatric Cancer and Their Families



Why is this important?



Pediatric cancer survivors often face lifelong health challenges, but we don't have a good understanding of the barriers they face in maintaining healthy behaviors.



A healthy lifestyle that includes physical activity, good nutrition, and sufficient sleep is important to reduce long-term health risks related to previous cancer treatments.



By identifying these barriers, we can develop interventions to support the unique needs of this population and improve their long-term health outcomes.

What did we do?

To assess the **cancer-related barriers to health behaviors** among adolescent and young adult survivors of pediatric cancer and their families:



- 1 We recruited participants from the Aflac Survivor Program at the Aflac Cancer and Blood Disorders Center at Children's Healthcare of Atlanta.
- 2 We distributed a web-based survey to survivors (18-30 years old) and caregivers of survivors (11-26 years old).
- 3 The survey asked about **obstacles to physical activity, nutrition, and sleep** that were due to cancer treatment.

What did we find?

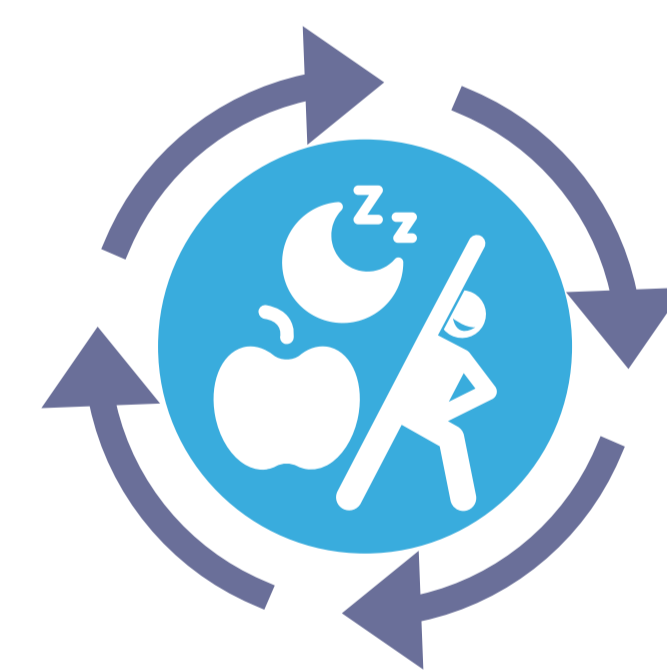
Of the **73 survivors and caregivers** that responded:



93% reported at least one **cancer-specific barrier to healthy behaviors** in their family.

Common obstacles were: cancer-related tiredness, decreased strength, picky eating, and lack of a bedtime routine.

- Survivor respondents reported more obstacles than caregivers.
- There were strong positive connections between obstacles to **physical activity, nutrition, and sleep**, meaning that challenges in one area often come with challenges in others.



What does this mean?



- Cancer-related barriers can make healthy lifestyle behaviors harder for young adult survivors of pediatric cancer and their families.
- It is important to consider these survivor-specific challenges when designing interventions to promote long-term health.
- Holistic approaches that address multiple health behaviors are needed.

What's next?

Future research

Future research should focus on replicating these findings with larger, more diverse samples to make the results more generalizable.

Qualitative research

Qualitative research could further explore the impact of cancer treatment on behaviors not directly related to cancer, which would help develop better-targeted interventions.

Health and well-being

Ultimately, these efforts will help create customized programs to support young adult and adolescent cancer survivors in achieving long-term health and well-being.