The experience of cancer can completely disrupt every aspect of a person’s life, from the shock and disbelief of diagnosis through months of arduous treatment. Oncology nurses stand with patients and families throughout the cancer experience to provide education and support, administer treatments, and assess and manage adverse events. A key component of oncology nursing care involves educating patients and caregivers about how to ensure sufficient intake of necessary nutrients and balance movement and rest during treatment.

Many patients experience overwhelming fatigue along with a host of gastrointestinal adverse events, including taste alterations, nausea, vomiting, and decreased appetite. During the active treatment phase, patients are generally advised to eat as tolerated and to practice energy conservation, balancing rest with physical activity (National Cancer Institute, 2022). Although these are often necessary coping strategies, by the end of treatment, many patients are malnourished and deconditioned (Mallard et al., 2022). Treatment completion typically leads to an abrupt decrease in contact with the oncology team, with little time to educate about how to return to healthy lifestyle behaviors during follow-up visits. Patients may feel unprepared to reintroduce a normal diet and physical activity without guidance, and referral to dedicated survivorship services, where health promotion is emphasized, may not occur for six or more months after treatment completion (Post et al., 2021).

Consistent implementation of evidence-based interventions, such as physical activity and nutrition interventions, may improve symptom management during treatment and long-term outcomes in survivorship. During active cancer treatment, research supports that these interventions improve disease and treatment-related symptoms such as fatigue, sleep, cognitive function, immune function, systemic inflammation, and body composition (Ligibel et al., 2022). A strong body of evidence highlights the importance of physical activity and healthy eating during post-treatment survivorship to improve or maintain body composition, decrease the risk of cancer recurrence, and positively affect all-cause mortality (Campbell et al., 2019). This article reviews and contrasts clinical guideline recommendations for health-promoting behaviors during and after cancer treatment to assist the