

Factsheet

About childhood cancer/blood disorders in B.C.

- Over **130 kids** in B.C. are diagnosed with cancer every year
([BC Children's Hospital](#))
- Around **350 kids** can be on treatment at any given time
([Childhood Cancer Family Support](#))
- **One in three** families find themselves dealing with housing, energy, or food insecurity in the first six months after their child's diagnosis
([Dana-Farber/Boston Children's Cancer and Blood Disorders Center](#))
- In one study, **82% of siblings** reported posttraumatic stress
([Alderfer, 2003](#))
- Families face, on average, over **\$28,000 in costs** in the first three months after diagnosis. Half of mothers had to relinquish their employment
([University of Toronto](#))
- A PTSD diagnosis is made for at least one family member in **over a third of families**
([Kazak, 2004](#))
- Diagnoses of **PTSD and PTSS** are more common for survivors when they become young adults
([Alderfer et al. 2009](#))
- Over 60% of survivors suffer from at least one chronic condition, and nearly 30% have severe or life-threatening conditions
([Oeffinger KC, Mertens AC, Sklar CA, et al. 2006](#))

About West Coast Kids Cancer Foundation (WCK)

- WCK was founded in 2017 and began programming in 2019
- The WCK team works from an office in Burnaby that's lined with freezers for the food programs
- WCK supports families across B.C., no matter where they are on, or beyond, the treatment journey
- Support is for the whole family including caregivers, siblings, young children, teens, and young adults
- WCK has supported over 380 families known to them, and hundreds more who make use of the meals and snacks provided to the hospital
- As well as delivering programming, WCK provides comprehensive resource guides and support to connect families into other services, funds, and organizations to help them navigate their way forward
- Major funders include Nicola Wealth and Social Venture Partners Vancouver

About WCK programs

Food

Food support provides much more than nutrients and calories. It saves time and shows comfort, care, and connection beyond the expression of words at a time of great isolation and distress. WCK meals in the hospital freezer have been described by several family members as their “lifesaver meal.”

Nourish at Home: Boxes full of nourishing meals to fill the freezer in families’ homes across B.C.

Food in the Freezer: Weekly deliveries of hundreds of nourishing, frozen meals that are available 24/7 for inpatient and outpatient families at BC Children’s Hospital and Surrey Memorial Hospital.

Smoothie Sundays: WCK prepares and serves made-to-order healthy smoothies for patients and their families at BC Children’s hospital. This provides a nutritious and filling treat to brighten their day.

- In 2023, WCK delivered over 22,500 food items to families (439 meals and snacks each week)
- The furthest food delivery so far has been to a family in Fort St John
- The most popular meal in the hospital freezer is Butter Chicken

Connection

Connection programs reduce the social isolation that comes with childhood cancer and blood disorders. Trained staff and volunteers build trusted relationships and provide spaces for kids, teens, and young adults to rebuild confidence and meet others in the same boat.

City Camp: The only camp in B.C. where kids and siblings of kids with cancer and blood disorders can join in on the magic of summer camp while still being able to sleep in their own bed at night. Hosted in close proximity to the hospital and with a medical team on site, kids on treatment can safely join in with the camp experience.

The Club: A program for female-identifying and nonbinary young adults living with or beyond cancer and blood disorders, and their siblings. The Club offers meaningful connection, respite, and a community of belonging. This increases participants’ capacity and confidence to navigate adult life and reduces the likelihood of negative post-treatment outcomes.

- In 2023, 71 kids came to City Camp
- 39 young people have been supported through The Club workshops and retreats



**WEST COAST KIDS
CANCER FOUNDATION**

Port Shirts

During treatment, so many choices are taken away from kids and families. Port Shirts give some control and dignity back. This gift of customized, adaptive clothing means the child doesn't have to remove their shirt and expose their tummy and chest for port treatment. Instead, they can simply unzip the zipper and tell their doctor when they're ready.

- WCK made and delivered over 150 Port Shirts to families in 2023
- B.C.-based ethical clothing brand Whistle & Flute donate their bamboo shirts to this program