

Children and teenagers undergoing cancer treatment often become less active, which can make them feel weaker physically and emotionally. The **FORTEe** clinical trial is testing an individualized exercise program, running for eight to ten weeks during intensive treatment.

WHAT WAS INVESTIGATED HERE?

- Six children and teenagers living with cancer and five parents shared their feelings about the exercise program in interviews.
- Researchers took part in ten exercise sessions, and carefully read and compared all interview responses to find the main ideas and shared feelings.



Many childhood cancer patients reported improvements in strength & endurance through regular exercise.

KEY FINDING 1: REDISCOVERING STRENGTH AND ABILITY

"[...] if you realize how much you can actually still do, or how much you can do again, that's quite cool; like [lifting] weights or cycling for some time or stuff like that [...]"
(16-year-old female patient)



Exercise sessions offered a welcome break from doctor visits, blood tests, and medication.

KEY FINDING 2: BEING MORE THAN A PATIENT FOR A MOMENT

"[...] I had something to look forward to during the day, especially during chemo when I wasn't allowed to leave the ward anyway, and as soon as the chemo was finished, one of the [exercise therapists] dropped by, and I was always looking forward to this [...]"
(15-year-old female patient)

FORTEe EXPLAINED

KEY FINDING 3: FEELING SEEN AS A PERSON

"[...] and she unbends because then, it's about her and not about her parents, right? it's about her as a person [...]"
(Mother of a 6-year-old female patient)

Trainers and therapists tailored the program to each child, making participants feel safe and understood.

WHY IT MATTERS



Emotional Well-Being: Exercise creates small breaks from treatment routines and boosts self-esteem.

Empowerment: When children and parents are involved in planning the exercise sessions, they feel more motivated and secure.



CONCLUSION

A tailored exercise program supports not only physical fitness but also mental well-being and daily functioning, benefiting children living with cancer, their families, and the entire care team.