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Opportunities and Challenges in the Prevention and Control of Cancer and Other Chronic Diseases: Children's Diet and Nutrition and Weight and Physical Activity

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Objective The purpose of this article is to review the role of behavioral research in disease prevention and control, with a particular emphasis on lifestyle- and behavior-related cancer and chronic disease risk factors—specifically, relationships among diet and nutrition and weight and physical activity with adult cancer, and tracking developmental origins of these health-promoting and health-compromising behaviors from childhood into adulthood. **Method** After reviewing the background of the field of cancer prevention and control and establishing plausibility for the role of child health behavior in adult cancer risk, studies selected from the pediatric published literature are reviewed. Articles were retrieved, selected, and summarized to illustrate that results from separate but related fields of study are combinable to yield insights into the prevention and control of cancer and other chronic diseases in adulthood through the conduct of nonintervention and intervention research with children in clinical, public health, and other contexts. **Results** As illustrated by the evidence presented in this review, there are numerous reasons (biological, psychological, and social), opportunities (school and community, health care, and family settings), and approaches (nonintervention and intervention) to understand and impact behavior change in children's diet and nutrition and weight and physical activity. **Conclusions** Further development and evaluation of behavioral science intervention protocols conducted with children are necessary to understand the efficacy of these approaches and their public health impact on proximal and distal cancer, cancer-related, and chronic disease

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outcomes before diffusion. It is clear that more attention should be paid to early life and early developmental phases in cancer prevention.

Key words: behavior; cancer; children; chronic disease; disease prevention; health promotion; lifestyle.

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