

15,000 extra children survived cancer thanks to improvements since the 1970s

19 November 2014



During the last 40 years over 15,000 more children have beaten cancer than would have done if survival had remained the same as in the 1970s, according to new figures from Cancer Research UK.

Overall survival has more than doubled over the last 40 years thanks to research and improved treatments; three-quarters of [children](#) with cancer are now cured compared to only a quarter in the early 1970s.

During this period survival for leukaemia – the most common type of childhood cancer – has risen from 33 per cent to more than 85 per cent of children surviving for at least five years. Liver cancers in children have seen survival increase from 14 per cent in the 1970s to more than 80 per cent today. This dramatic increase is largely due to work funded by Cancer Research UK that discovered more effective combinations of treatment for children with this disease.

But such improvements have not been seen in all types of cancer. For a type of [childhood cancer](#) called neuroblastoma five year [survival](#) has risen

from around 17 per cent in the early 1970s to 67 per cent today, but the most aggressive form of the disease remains very difficult to treat.

The new figures mark the launch of Cancer Research UK's Little Stars Awards this year which, in partnership with retailer TK Maxx, recognise the bravery of children who have undergone [cancer treatment](#).

Amy Hillier, 27, from Surrey, was diagnosed with Non-Hodgkin Lymphoma when she was just 11 and underwent months of chemotherapy. "I'm alive today thanks to my doctors, nurses and the research that developed the treatments that beat my cancer. My mum told me I was going to be cured - I never doubted it. It has affected the person I am - it has made me want to live life to the full. I hope that more and more children are able to survive their cancer in the future – research will be at the heart of making this happen."

Kate Law, director of clinical research at Cancer Research UK, said: "Thanks to research more children than ever are beating cancer. But there is much more to be done to give every child diagnosed with cancer the best chance of surviving and to improve treatments so that children can lead a full life after their diagnosis. Cancer Research UK's new strategy highlights our commitment to do more to beat [cancer](#) in children, teenagers and young adults. To turn this into reality we're funding a number of trials and research projects which aim to understand more about the disease and to develop more effective and kinder treatments."

More information: The report is available online: www.cancerresearchuk.org/cancer-...hoodcancer/survival/

Provided by Cancer Research UK

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