



Cuddles Foundation



Impact Report 2023-24

Analysing the impact of nutrition
on children with cancer in India.





New acts for new impact

20,03,000+. That's the number of nutrition counselling sessions the support of our wonderful donor community helped make possible in 2023 - 2024. Thank you!

This year, as we set out to expand to 46 hospitals and 20,000 children, our focus is on quality of care. It's our effort to comfort and understand our caregivers while we take care of their nutrition needs. We are pairing our clinical nutritionists with patient support coordinators in every hospital. In addition to handling aid distribution, they have become emotional support pillars for caregivers. We are also piloting a tele-counselling model for quality counselling and aid to remote areas. In addition, we will be launching the Cuddles Learning Management Portal to standardise training and upskill our wonderful team of clinical nutritionists.

In larger news, I'm happy to let you know that our proven learnings will now have a role to play on a national scale - we are presently working on co-authoring the ICCi nutrition guidelines, an initiative in standardising nutritional guidelines in pediatric oncology for the country. This means a lot to us.

Before I sign off, I'd like to personally seek your support of our 'No More Chemo Parties'. This is a joyful celebration when our kids complete their treatment. This is replete with confetti and singing and we would love for you to be a part of them!

To enable all of these meaningful developments, we will also be planning Mini Fundraisers in key cities across the country. Come and see us with your friends and families. Let's do big things together this year!

Purnota

With gratitude,

Purnota Dutta Bahl

Founder & CEO

Cuddles Foundation

Cuddles Foundation

Changing how childhood cancer is fought in India by bridging the gap between medicine and nutrition.

Since 2013, we have been working with government and charity cancer hospitals, enabling them with trained paediatric oncology nutritionists and food aid so that more children may win the battle against cancer. With the FoodHeals™ App, a first-of-its-kind tech platform that automates clinical nutritional functions, we are able to create an ecosystem that enables medical and nutrition teams to collaborate more effectively and make specialised nutritional care more accessible to children. We also freely share our breakthroughs and experience with healthcare practitioners so that they may use this knowledge to save thousands of more children.

Our Reach*

14

States

42

Hospitals

55+

Nutritionists



▶ Recipient of the National Award for Child Welfare, 2015-16.

The FoodHeals™ Program

Our program is customised to every child's medical condition to provide the right nutrition needed to complete treatment successfully. Here's how:

Assess

We first assess and screen the nutritional status of every child seeking cancer treatment in our partner hospitals.

Evaluate

We evaluate side effects that may negatively impact the child's nutritional status.

Prescribe

We finalise the right nutrition therapy and prescribe a customised diet plan for the child.

Provide

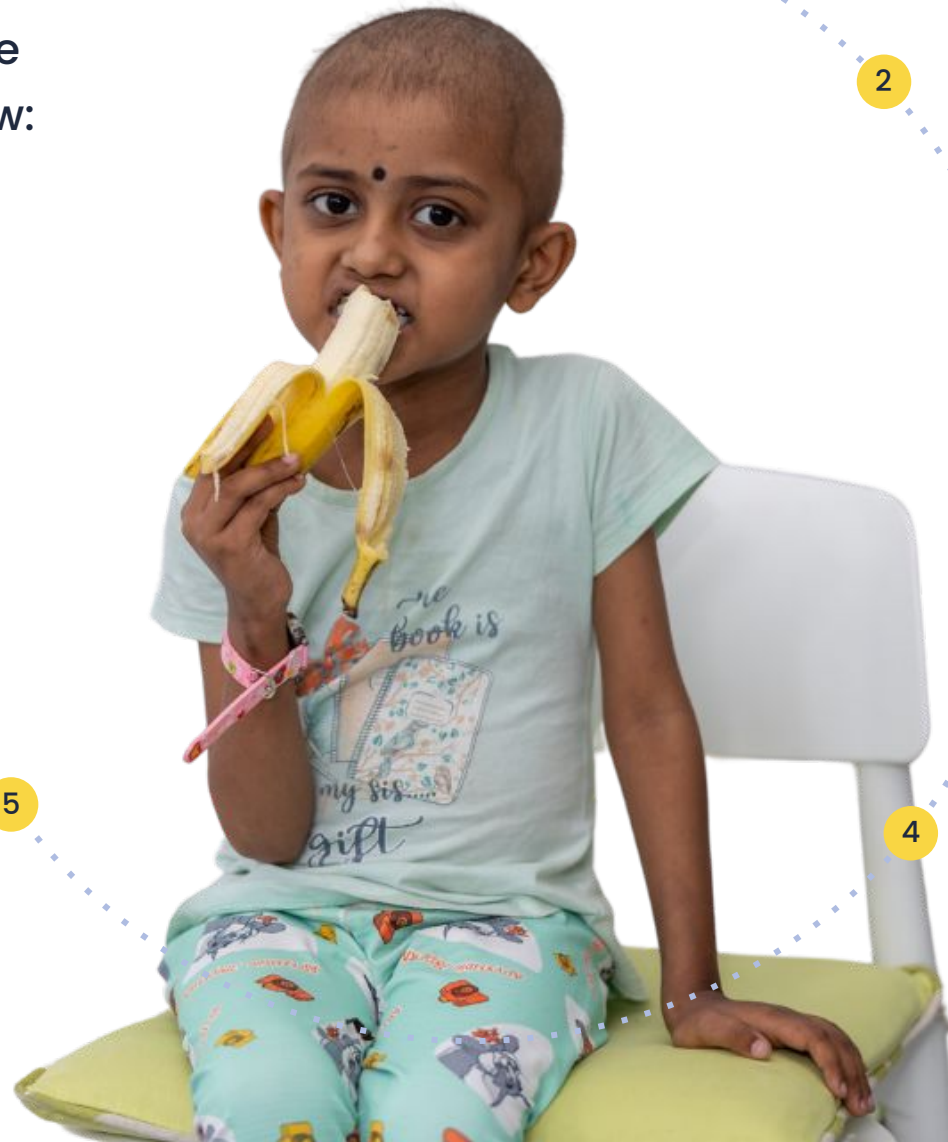
We aid and support the child and family by providing nutritional supplements, hot meals, in-meals, eggs, bananas and monthly ration bundles for a family of four.

Support

We also support patient families with the knowledge to make healthier food choices by organising parent support group meetings, videos and educational talks.

Monitor

We continuously monitor the child's nutritional status and reassess plans, if required.

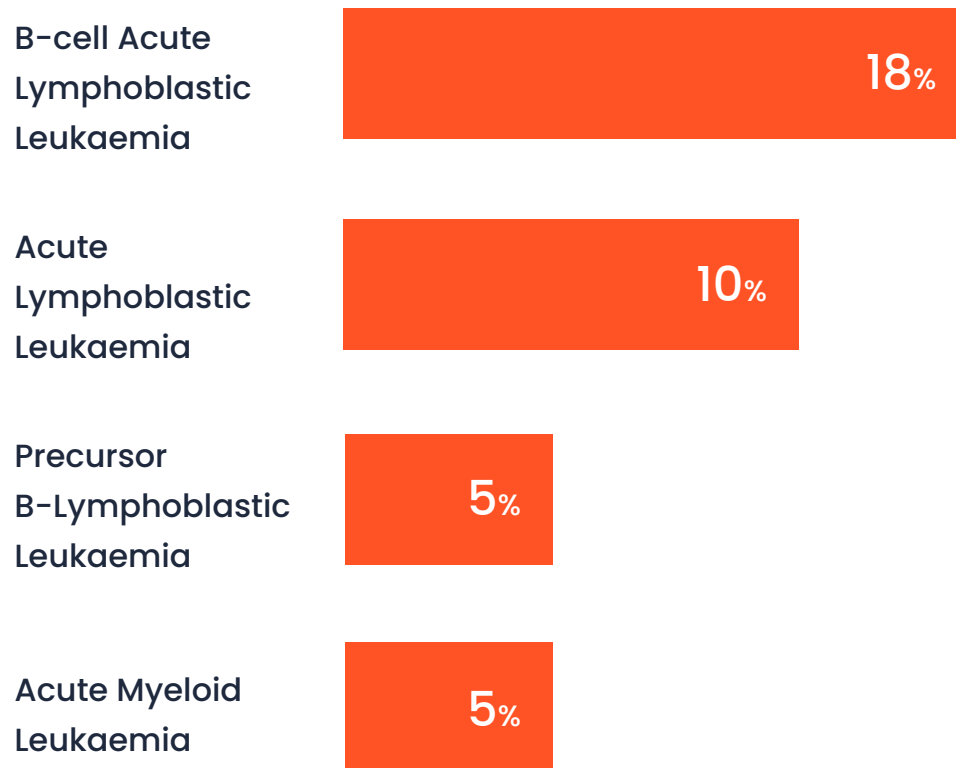


In the year 2023-24, we engaged with 18,100+ children across our 42 partner hospitals. Here's what we found:

18,100+

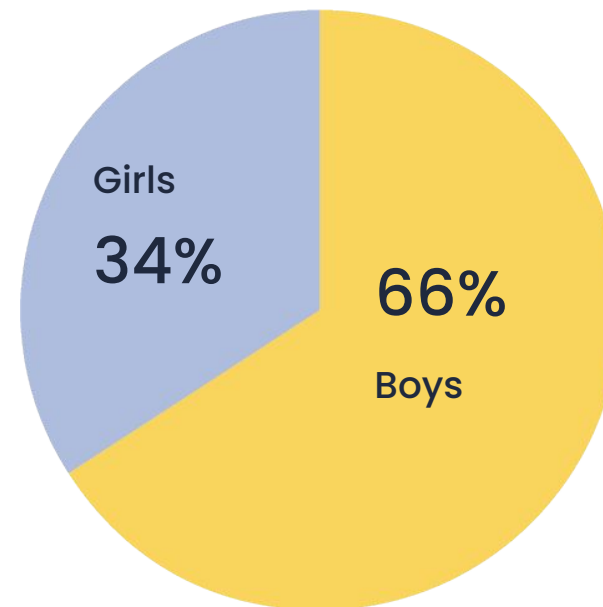
Patients engaged

Top 4 Prevalent Cancers



2,03,000+

Counselling sessions conducted



► Gender Ratio undergoing cancer treatment

The trend we see in our work seems to resonate with the ratio of cancer diagnosis amongst boys and girls in India which is 1.58.¹ This means that for approximately every 5 boys diagnosed with cancer only 3 girls are diagnosed. This gender imbalance is largely seen in poorer countries where girls are less likely than boys to be referred to a doctor when they fall ill.

► Impact on treatment follow-up

96% of children followed up on their treatment plan when nutrition was a part of it.*



Faiyaz, Sahil's father, who works as an embroidery worker, finds comfort in his son's strength

“

I had to put Sahil's health first. It was hard to hold on to my job once I had made that decision. The support provided by the doctors and the Cuddles team saved my son's life. What more need I say.

[Read more](#)

**Patients who returned for a second visit or continued treatment.*

**Patient name & photograph has been included with their guardian's consent.*

► Impact on Nutritional Status

82% of patients improved or maintained their nutritional status, despite cancer therapy like chemotherapy or radiation.

“



"Thanks to our partnership with Cuddles Foundation, we've seen a notable improvement in our pediatric cancer patients' treatment response and well-being. Their provision of nutritious food has been crucial in helping children tolerate treatments better. Despite challenges, their daily rounds ensure adequate nutrition, keeping treatment refusal and abandonment low at 10.8% in 2023. This collaboration has also brought our survival rates closer to Tata Memorial Hospital's benchmarks. Cuddles Foundation has become an essential part of our care team at Homi Bhabha Cancer Hospital, Varanasi"

Dr Vikramjit S Kanwar

Chief of Pediatric Oncology, Homi Bhabha Cancer Hospital, Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh



Nutrition aid is as crucial as counselling.

Considering that a large majority of Cuddles' beneficiaries earn less than ₹10,000* per month, distribution of nutrition aid is essential.

▶ Aid distributed in the year 2023-24

21k

Ration bundles distributed

4,666

Average kilocalories given per day with the ration program

₹6,200

Savings added on average to caregiver incomes per month**

728k

In-meals

54k

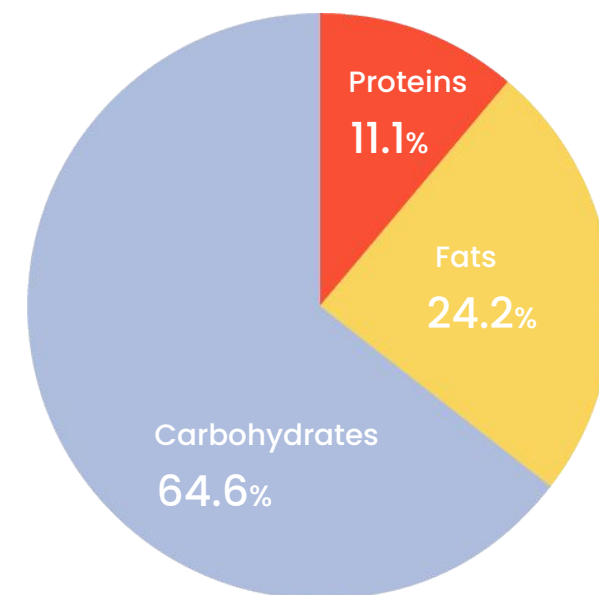
Hot meals

56k

Nutritional supplements

*Responses were collected from 3,044 beneficiaries at over 35+ partner hospitals in August 2023.

**Calculated basis a child availing of all 4 programs



Nutritional composition of ration bundles disbursed

Our monthly ration bundles help feed a family of four. Each bundle contains cereals, pulses, millets, nuts and milk, ghee, oil, spices, condiments and basic personal hygiene products.

At 4,666 kcal/day the ration bundle fulfills 100% of the total calorie requirement for the child per day and contributes to the nutritional requirements of the family members too.

How your contribution to Cuddles helps achieve SDGs



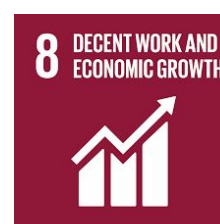
Financial protection from catastrophic illness like cancer reduces poverty



Promote access to care that is not discriminatory against girls and enables mothers and families.



Reducing hunger and malnutrition improves childhood cancer outcomes



Investing in diverse occupations such as nutritionists required for care stimulates local economic growth and employment.



Investing in childhood cancer supports attainment of multiple health related targets



Promote access to care for all communities to reduce catastrophic health expenditure and inequalities.

Our Methodology: What We Measured

Cases

Patients engaged at the partner hospital(s) are noted on a rolling basis, and the gathered data is analysed for the annual time period.

- # of patients engaged
- # of counselling sessions
- # of cases by ratios (male/female)
- # of cases by types of prevalent cancers

Rate of Follow-up

This includes the percentage of patients who return for a second visit and/or continue treatment. This determinant is a reversal of the failure to start treatment, which is a subset of the standard measure of treatment abandonment.

- % of patients who did follow-up*

Nutrition Aid

We assess the nutritional support provided in two ways: in terms of value i.e., average kilocalories given per day; and average price of aid as savings to caregiver income; and in terms of physical quantities i.e., ration bundles, in-meals, nutritional supplements and hot meals disbursed and nutritional composition of the ration bundle.

- Average kilocalories per day
- Average savings added to caregiver incomes
- # of nutritional supplements distributed
- # of hot meals distributed
- # of in-meals distributed
- # of ration bundles distributed
- Nutritional composition per ration bundle

- ▶ In consultation with cancer and nutrition specialists and multidisciplinary experts, the following metrics were determined as appropriate to help us demonstrate the effectiveness and impact of the FoodHeals™ program:

Impact on Nutritional Status

At every visit, nutritionists note patient MUAC or Body Mass Index (BMI), which is required to determine the patient's nutritional status. Impact on nutritional status covers change in patient's nutritional status from their first to last visit.

- % increased or no change*

Case Stories

This notes the qualitative impact of the FoodHeals™ program. Case stories highlight patients who have been engaged as part of the FoodHeals™ program, adhered to their treatment schedule and have benefited from the program.

*For these analyses, we've only included data from partner hospitals who've shared a minimum of six months of program data with us via the app.



Published in May 2024.

For more information, email:
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References

1. Bhopal SS, Mann KD, Pearce MS. Registration of cancer in girls remains lower than expected in countries with low/middle incomes and low female education rates. *Br J Cancer*. 2012;107(1):183-188.
2. Socioeconomic study of Cuddles Foundation beneficiaries August 2023, Cuddles Foundation internal document

Feed a child. Starve cancer.

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