Purpose/Objectives: To explore the experience of living with a preexisting functional disability and a cancer diagnosis and to identify strategies that promote health in the growing population of cancer survivors.

Research Approach: Qualitative, descriptive.

Setting: Four sites in the United States.

Participants: 19 female cancer survivors with preexisting disabling conditions.

Methodologic Approach: Four focus groups were conducted. The group discussions were audio recorded and transcribed and analyzed using content analysis techniques.

Findings: Analytic categories included living with a cancer diagnosis, health-promotion strategies, and wellness program development for survivors with preexisting functional limitations. Participants described many challenges associated with managing a cancer diagnosis on top of living with a chronic disabling functional limitation. They identified strategies to maintain health and topics in health-promotion programs tailored for this unique group of cancer survivors.

Conclusions: The “double whammy” of a cancer diagnosis for people with preexisting functional limitations requires modification of health-promotion strategies and programs to promote wellness in this group of cancer survivors.

Interpretation: Nurses and other healthcare providers must attend to patients’ preexisting conditions as well as the challenges of the physical, emotional, social, and economic sequelae of a cancer diagnosis.

Knowledge Translation: Cancer survivors with preexisting functional disabilities had difficulties finding cancer care providers who could manage their unique needs. That may be because some cancer-care providers are inadequately prepared to care for patients with cancer who have complex preexisting conditions. Cancer survivors with preexisting conditions may benefit from health-promotion programs that emphasize self-advocacy strategies, management of the economic impact of multiple diagnoses, and wellness activities adapted to their unique functional limitations.