

What is a Pediatric Neurosurgeon?

If your child has problems involving the head, spine, or nervous system, a *Pediatric Neurosurgeon* has the experience and qualifications to treat your child.

Neurosurgical problems seen by pediatric neurosurgeons are often quite different from those commonly seen by adult or general neurosurgeons. Special training in pediatric diseases as they relate to pediatric neurosurgical diseases is important. Pediatric neurosurgical problems often are present for life. Pediatric neurosurgeons have a special and long-standing relationship with their patients. Children with nervous system problems frequently require ongoing and close follow-up throughout childhood and adolescence.

What kind of training do pediatric neurosurgeons have?

Pediatric neurosurgeons are medical doctors who have had

- At least 4 years of medical school
- One year of surgical internship
- Five or more years of residency training in neurological surgery
- Additional training in pediatric neurosurgery
- Certification from the American Board of Neurological Surgery and the American Board of Pediatric Neurological Surgery

Pediatric neurosurgeons treat children from the newborn period through the teenage years. They choose to make pediatric care the core of their medical practice, and the unique nature of medical and surgical care of children is learned from advanced training and experience in practice.

What types of treatments do pediatric neurosurgeons provide?

Pediatric neurosurgeons diagnose, treat, and manage children's nervous system problems and head and spinal deformities including the following:

- Head deformities
- Spine deformities
- Problems and injuries of the brain, spine, or nerves
- Gait abnormalities (spasticity)
- Birth injuries (weakness of arms and legs)

Where can I find a pediatric neurosurgeon?

Pediatric neurosurgeons practice in a variety of medical institutions including children's hospitals, university medical centers, and large community hospitals. The American Board of Pediatric Neurological Surgery Web site (www.abpns.org) maintains a list of all board certified pediatric neurosurgeons.

Pediatric neurosurgeons — the best care for children

Children are not just small adults. They cannot always say what is bothering them. They cannot always answer medical questions, and are not always able to be patient and cooperative during a medical examination. Pediatric neurosurgeons know how to examine and treat children in a way that makes them relaxed and cooperative. In addition, pediatric neurosurgeons use equipment and facilities specifically designed for children. Most pediatric neurosurgery offices are arranged and decorated with children in mind. This includes the examination rooms and waiting rooms, which may have toys, videos, and reading materials for children. This helps create a comfortable and non-threatening environment for your child.

The pediatric neurosurgeon will provide the diagnostic and surgical interventions in a hospital that has the support services, pediatric physicians, and nurses necessary for the care of your child. Children with special needs require that the pediatric neurosurgeon work closely with the primary care pediatrician and the pediatric specialist to provide coordinated and comprehensive care of the child.

If your pediatrician suggests that your child see a pediatric neurosurgeon, you can be assured that he or she has the widest range of treatment options, the most extensive and complete training, and the greatest expertise in dealing with children and in treating neurosurgical problems.

The information contained in this publication should not be used as a substitute for the medical care and advice of your pediatrician. There may be variations in treatment that your pediatrician may recommend based on individual facts and circumstances.

From your doctor

American Academy
of Pediatrics



The American Academy of Pediatrics is an organization of 57,000 primary care pediatricians, pediatric medical subspecialists, and pediatric surgical specialists dedicated to the health, safety, and well-being of infants, children, adolescents, and young adults.

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