

Pediatric Neurologist



If you were having trouble with headaches, dizziness or fainting, your parents might bring you to see a pediatric neurologist. These doctors work with children with problems stemming from their nerves or brain. Children with cerebral palsy or muscular dystrophy often see a neurologist.

Career Path

If you are curious about how the brain works, you might be interested in neurology. To become a neurologist, you must go to medical school and then complete a residency of five to eight years to learn more about this complex specialty.

A neurologist can learn about how your brain and nerves are working in many different ways. If you have ever had your knee tapped with a hammer at the doctor's office, you have had your nerves tested. The large nerve connecting your brain to your leg makes the muscles contract when the hammer taps the right spot. If your nerves are not working properly, your leg might not react.

Children with diseases such as muscular dystrophy and cerebral palsy often have problems with their nerves and muscles. Neurologists can test the health of your nerves and muscles using a machine called an EMG (electromyograph).

Technology Spotlight

In one type of EMG test, the doctor inserts a small needle under your skin into the muscle. Then the doctor will ask you to try to move that muscle. When the muscle contracts, a signal shows up on a screen and the sound of the electrical signal can be heard through a speaker. The machine records all the signals produced by your muscles. The doctor uses these recordings to see if your muscles are working as they should.



To see how your muscles and nerves work together, try this fun activity:

1. Have a friend hold a ruler by its tip.
2. Place your hand just below the ruler, ready to catch it.
3. Tell your friend to drop the ruler without warning.
4. Try to catch the ruler as quickly as you can.
5. See where you grasped the ruler. Look at the chart on the right to estimate your reaction time. Now let your friend try it. Who's faster?

<u>Inches</u>	<u>Reaction Time</u>
2	0.10 seconds
4	0.14 seconds
6	0.17 seconds
8	0.20 seconds
10	0.23 seconds
12	0.25 seconds