

Care for Children with Gastrointestinal Disorders

Referrals/ Urgent Access/ Hospital Transfers

To refer patients to our Pediatric Gastroenterology Department for routine appointments, please call 216/444-9000, or toll-free, 800/553-5056, ext. 49000. The department's Urgent Access Clinic offers appointments for 20 new patients each Friday morning.

To arrange for hospital transfers, locally or regionally, to our Children's Hospital, call 216/738-5050 or toll-free 866/CCF-TOTS (223-8687). These physician lines are open 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Notes to referring physicians are usually sent within 24 hours of a patient's visit.

The Children's Hospital: Inspiring Potential

The Children's Hospital at The Cleveland Clinic has one goal: restoring health to children and adolescents so they may realize their full potential. Since its doors opened in 1921, The Cleveland Clinic has routinely treated pediatric patients.

Today, The Children's Hospital counts a team of highly skilled pediatric gastroenterologists among its staff of more than 100 pediatricians and pediatric specialists. The Pediatric Gastroenterology Department provides each of its patients with state-of-the-art diagnosis and treatment, delivered with compassion, patience and understanding.

Comprehensive Gastroenterologic Care

Pediatric gastrointestinal disorders range from benign to life-threatening, and acute to chronic. Among the childhood gastrointestinal maladies most commonly treated at The Children's Hospital are:

- ✓ gastroesophageal reflux
- ✓ chronic abdominal pain
- ✓ inflammatory bowel diseases (Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis)
- ✓ motility disorders, including irritable bowel syndrome
- ✓ liver disease
- ✓ colon polyps
- ✓ colic
- ✓ diarrhea
- ✓ constipation
- ✓ fecal incontinence
- ✓ malabsorption disorders
- ✓ peptic ulcer disease
- ✓ esophageal varices
- ✓ foreign body ingestion requiring endoscopic retrieval

Patient visits to the department number about 8,500 annually. Nearly 1,000 children with Crohn's disease and about 300 with ulcerative colitis have been seen over the last four years, making this among the largest pediatric IBD centers in the United States.

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Pediatric Gastroenterology Physician Team

Robert Wyllie, M.D.

Chairman, Department of Pediatric Gastroenterology

Specialty Interests: Inflammatory bowel disease, acid-related disorders, diagnostic and therapeutic endoscopy

Vera Hupertz, M.D.

Specialty Interests: Liver disease and transplantation

Barbara Kaplan, M.D.

Specialty Interests: Infantile colic, gastroesophageal reflux, peptic ulcer disease and inflammatory bowel disease

Marsha Kay, M.D.

Specialty Interests: Diagnostic and therapeutic endoscopy, inflammatory bowel disease and gastroesophageal reflux disease

Lori Mahajan, M.D.

Specialty Interests: Recurrent abdominal pain, diagnostic and therapeutic endoscopy, and inflammatory bowel disease

Rita Steffen, M.D.

Specialty Interests: Fecal incontinence, constipation, gastrointestinal motility disorders and motility testing

Innovative Diagnostic Procedures

Every test or procedure a child requires is available at The Children's Hospital. One of the specialized diagnostics offered here is colonic motility testing, performed at only a few institutions nationwide. This test is an invaluable component of a very active Center for Pediatric Functional and GI Motility Disorders. Multiple intraluminal electrical impedance measurements, combined with pH monitoring, help gastroenterologists assess acid and nonacid reflux episodes in children.

Colonoscopy and endoscopy are conducted routinely, and advanced radiographic imaging techniques, such as magnetic resonance cholangiopancreatography and ultrasound-guided biopsies, are readily available.

Leading-Edge Treatment

Innovative treatments are a hallmark of the Pediatric Gastroenterology Department.

Infliximab infusion has revolutionized the treatment of IBD in children by dramatically reducing hospitalizations, nearly eliminating the need for chronic steroid use and significantly decreasing the frequency of surgery. Cleveland Clinic pediatric gastroenterologists were co-principal investigators in pediatric clinical trials of this drug.

For children with chronic bowel disease, the Center for Pediatric Functional and GI Motility Disorders supplements treatment protocols with cognitive-behavioral techniques such as biofeedback that help children manage pain and improve daily function.

A comprehensive pediatric liver transplantation program provides different options for children with end-stage liver disease. Adult-to-pediatric, living-related donor transplants and whole-liver cadaveric transplants are now offered for children, and split-liver cadaveric transplants hold promise for pediatric patients.

The Pediatric Gastroenterology team makes it a priority to educate patients and families, and encourages them in directing their own care. Each of our physicians offers care for the full spectrum of gastroenterology problems affecting children. In addition, our physicians have areas of special interest, listed at left.