The Pediatric Spinal Disorders Center

The Rocky Mountain Pediatric Neuroscience Center has created The Pediatric Spinal Disorders Center to provide comprehensive evaluation and treatment of children with congenital spinal disorders. We know that children with spinal disorders have complex problems that need to be carefully evaluated by Neurosurgery, Urology, Orthopedics and Rehab. Thus, these independent physicians have come together in the same location to make it easier for patients to see all of the necessary specialists without multiple doctor visits. Using a truly multidisciplinary approach to management, our team of fellowship-trained pediatric subspecialists strives to optimize the functional abilities of each child.

The Center is conveniently located on the Presbyterian/St. Luke’s Medical Center campus just east of downtown Denver.

The Pediatric Spinal Disorders Center

is affiliated with Rocky Mountain Hospital for Children, which serves patients and community physicians from a six-state region. With 300 pediatricians, pediatric subspecialists, obstetricians, neonologists, maternal-fetal specialists, family medicine physicians and other doctors specializing in pediatric care, Rocky Mountain Hospital for Children has assembled the largest collaborative team of pediatric, neonatal and maternal-fetal specialists available in the Rocky Mountain region. The facility offers patients and their families the advantages of a large specialty medical center, while providing all the specialized services of a children’s hospital, including more than 40 medical, surgical and subspecialty services that meet the special physical, developmental and emotional needs of infants, children and teens.

www.RockyMountainHospitalForChildren.com
www.areteneurosurgical.com

The Pediatric Spinal Disorders Center at the Rocky Mountain Pediatric Neuroscience Center

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The Pediatric Spinal Disorders Center at the Rocky Mountain Pediatric Neuroscience Center

What are Congenital Spinal Disorders?
Pediatric Spinal Disorders include:
- Spina Bifida
- Caudal regression
- Tethered spinal cord
- VATER/VACTERL Syndrome
- Scoliosis
- Other congenital spine defects

Typically these defects are noted at birth but can also be occult. Simple skin tags, dimples or abnormal skin lesions on the back can help identify occult defects or a tethered spinal cord. It is important that these children receive treatment before symptoms occur to prevent spinal cord damage.

What Do We Do?
Patients with spinal disorders typically have a problem with the development of the spine or brain called a neural tube defect. As a result they tend to have multiple associated problems including:
- Hydrocephalus
- Scoliosis
- Chiari malformation
- Hip dislocation
- Tethered spinal cord
- Urologic abnormalities
- Depression and obesity

Evaluation of patients with spinal disorders includes functional goal assessment, orthopedic evaluation, urologic testing, education, and close neurosurgical follow-up to assess for complications related to hydrocephalus, or tethered cord. Long-term functional outcomes are significantly improved by a multi-disciplinary team approach.

Children with spinal disorders need to learn to adapt to their physical limitations as they grow. Often, the use of crutches, braces or wheelchairs can help children achieve more independence. With new techniques, children can also learn to be independent with their bladder and bowel function. Because of the neurologic problems that result from the damage to the spinal cord, people with spinal disorders may need multiple surgeries and extensive medical care. Our goal is to use a team approach to improve communication between the members of our team, the family and the primary care physicians so that we can address problems before more complications occur.

How Do We Evaluate Spinal Disorders?
The Spina Bifida Association estimates that spina bifida occurs in more than 7 of every 10,000 live births — and that there are more than 166,000 people living with spina bifida. When children are identified before they are born to have spina bifida, it can be a very confusing and difficult time for parents. We are available to provide counseling and education to help parents understand what this diagnosis might mean for their child. Once a child is born with a spinal defect, the evaluation will involve initial exams by a neurosurgeon and neonatologist. Ultrasounds of the head are often done to evaluate for hydrocephalus. Sometimes surgery is required to close the defect and place a shunt to drain excess fluid from the brain. Later evaluations by Urology and Orthopedics are essential to make sure that all issues are addressed.

After the initial inpatient stay, children can be followed by the team at The Pediatric Spinal Disorders Center. A treatment and followup plan will be designed for each child depending on their individual needs and challenges. Evaluation is tailored to each child and includes urologic testing, MRI’s, skeletal x-rays, and functional assessments as needed. Sometimes other specialists may be required and we have available all of the pediatric subspecialties which may be necessary.

Our Team
The Pediatric Spinal Disorders Center at the Rocky Mountain Pediatric Neuroscience Center:
- **Pediatric Neurosurgery**
  Dr. Renatta Osterdock
- **Pediatric Orthopedics**
  Dr. Shay Bess
  Dr. Laurel Bensen
  Erik Heinzen, P.A.
- **Pediatric Rehabilitation Medicine**
  Dr. Suzanne Rosenberg
- **Pediatric Urology**
  Dr. Job Chacko
  Dr. Peter Furness
  Dr. Bruce Blythe

To Schedule an Appointment with The Pediatric Spinal Disorders Center at the Rocky Mountain Pediatric Neuroscience Center, please call 303.832.2449.