

Dedicated to Spinal Cord Injury Rehabilitation

Shriners Hospitals for Children's spinal cord injury (SCI) rehabilitation program helps children and teens with SCI have healthy, fulfilling lives.



Sustaining a spinal cord injury can be a frightening, overwhelming experience. From the point of injury down to the toes, a spinal cord injury can affect every function of the body.

There are 12,000 new cases of spinal cord injury in the U.S. each year, approximately 10 percent affecting children under age 16. Automobile accidents are the number-one cause of spinal cord injury.

In addition to providing expert medical and rehabilitative care, it is critically important for caregivers to be aware of and meet the developmental, social and educational needs of children and adolescents with spinal cord injuries in order to ensure they have the best opportunity for a full, satisfying life. That is why, in the mid-1980s, Shriners Hospitals for Children established the nation's first spinal cord injury (SCI) rehabilitation programs specifically designed for children and teenagers.

Patients participating in these programs – available at the Shriners Hospitals for Children in Chicago, Philadelphia and Sacramento, Calif. – receive the complete range of services needed in order to recover to the fullest extent possible.

As is true of all care offered at Shriners Hospitals for Children, the SCI rehabilitation program is family-centered and multidisciplinary, offering each patient a complete, easily accessible care program. The

multidisciplinary treatment team may include a variety of surgeons and other physicians, therapists, therapeutic recreation specialists, psychologists, social workers, dieticians and teachers.

Innovative therapy efforts include body-weight supported manual treadmill training or robotic treadmill training with the Lokomat, a device that automates movement therapy and improves the efficiency of treadmill training in patients with neurological movement disorders, such as spinal cord injury. Shriners Hospitals for Children — Chicago is the first in the health care system and the sixth hospital in the entire country to acquire a pediatric Lokomat. Both of these therapies provide weight-bearing opportunities and can help stimulate muscles and build strength and stamina.

In addition to therapy, exercise and activity-based rehabilitation, including aqua therapy, pet therapy and adaptive sports, is emphasized. These activities build strength and stamina and increase social interaction, confidence and independence. Some of the hospitals also offer specialty camps emphasizing aspects of health, fitness and independence.

Shriners Hospitals for Children is considered an expert in gathering and interpreting statistics and data regarding pediatric SCI and has the only pediatric spinal cord injury database

in the country, and possibly in the world. The respect for the health care system among those working in SCI prevention and rehabilitation is indicated by leadership positions held by Shriners Hospitals for Children staff. These include memberships on the boards of directors of the American Spinal Injury Association, and officer positions with the American Paraplegia Society and the American Association of Spinal Cord Injury Psychologists and Social Workers, three national organizations dedicated to improving the lives of those with spinal cord injuries.

In order to provide the best, most innovative care possible, Shriners Hospitals for Children is involved in several research efforts involving SCI. These include quality of life studies, the development of diagnostic standards specifically for pediatric injuries and studies to understand the complexities of regenerating the spinal cord.

Shriners Hospitals for Children shares its expertise in pediatric spinal cord injury rehabilitation through academic affiliations at noteworthy nearby institutions, such as Rush Medical College in Chicago, University of California Davis and Temple University in Philadelphia, and through various medical outreach programs.

While Shriners Hospitals for Children provides this expert care without any financial obligation to patients or families, the organization depends on the generosity of donors to support its mission of caring for children. To learn how you can help, please visit www.donate2SHC.org.

For more information about Shriners Hospitals for Children, please visit www.shrinershospitals.org.



Shriners Hospitals
for Children™