

Children's Orthopedics

Part skill, part having fun

Setting a broken bone so it heals properly is no easy task. Setting a broken bone that's still growing is even more challenging. The margin of error is slim, and the slightest misstep can lead to severe, sometimes irreversible, complications later in life.

"Many orthopedic surgeons are not comfortable working with developing bones," says Shawn Standard, M.D., a board-certified bone doctor at Sinai Hospital who works almost exclusively with young patients. "Here it's what we specialize in."

Standard is a faculty member of the International Center for Limb Lengthening, part of the Rubin Institute for Advanced Orthopedics at Sinai Hospital. The center delivers advanced orthopedic solutions to pediatric patients with bone deformities and is the first of its kind in the United States.

Doctors in the center specialize in diagnosing and treating children with developmental and congenital bone deformities, bow-legs and knock-knees, hip and foot deformities such as clubfoot, and leg length discrepancies.

They also see plenty of trauma victims, whether the cause is a fall from the monkey bars or trampoline, a bicycle accident, or a sports injury.

Starting with the initial visit, doctors in the International Center for Limb Lengthening take the same approach in every case: achieve the highest quality of life for the patient with the least amount of risk. They are committed to exhausting all possible treatment options before deciding on surgery.

When surgery is necessary, many orthopedic

surgeons find it challenging to explain the procedure in a way a child will understand.

"First the patient has to be relaxed – we just try to have fun with them," Standard says. "Then we start by explaining why we're looking at their legs and what we are looking for."

The center's doctors apply the latest surgical techniques to treat bone deformities and other bone problems. An important first step is educating patient families on available techniques and making sure they understand the commitment involved for the selected procedure.

Legg-Calvé-Perthes disease is a rare disease of the hip that affects approximately one in 1,200 children. If not detected promptly, it can lead to growth deformities and arthritis. The team of orthopedic surgeons at Sinai has had success using a pioneering hip distraction procedure to reverse the prognosis in some of the most difficult cases.

"Our expertise and experience with joint reconstruction lend to our ability to really treat this disease," Standard says.

As is the case with many child health concerns, early detection and intervention is the key to getting better sooner. Because their bones are still growing, even a small bump on the rump, if not treated early, can lead to bigger health problems later in life.

"A parent may think it's just a sprained ankle, so it's not a big deal. But it can be a big deal. A little early intervention in a child can make a big difference," Standard says.

For more information about children's orthopedics at Sinai Hospital, call 410-601-WELL (9355).



Shawn Standard, M.D., is a board-certified orthopedic surgeon at Sinai Hospital.



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