

Children's Health



Helping Children Live The Best Possible Life

(NAPSA)—Every year there are 12,000 new cases of spinal cord injuries (SCI) in the U.S. Approximately 10 percent affect children under age 16.

The implications of SCI last a lifetime, point out the experts at Shriners Hospitals for Children®, often resulting in some degree of paralysis and disruption of the body's voluntary and involuntary actions.



In addition to providing expert medical and rehabilitative care, it is important for caregivers to be

aware of and meet the developmental, social and educational needs of children and adolescents with spinal cord injuries to ensure they have the best opportunity for a full, satisfying life.

In the mid-1980s, Shriners Hospitals for Children established the nation's first SCI rehabilitation programs specifically designed for children and teenagers. Shriners Hospitals for Children is involved in spinal cord injury research, including quality of life studies, the refinement of diagnostic standards specifically for pediatric injuries and studies to understand the complexities of regenerating the spinal cord.

Patients participating in these programs—at Shriners Hospitals for Children in Chicago, Philadelphia and Sacramento, Calif.—receive the complete range of services.

The family-centered rehabilitation program is interdisciplinary, offering each patient a complete, easily accessible care program. The treatment team may include a variety of surgeons and other physicians, nurses, physical therapists, occupational therapists, therapeutic recreation specialists, psychologists, social workers and dietitians.

Exercise and activity-based rehabilitation, including aqua



Rehabilitation activities help build stamina and increase social confidence.

therapy, pet therapy and adaptive sports, are important parts of the effort. 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.

In addition to providing the best, most innovative care possible, the hospitals are involved in several research efforts involving SCI.

Currently, the hospitals are funding 10 research and clinical studies involving different aspects of SCI, ranging from cell repair to quality of life issues. In addition, researchers at Shriners Hospitals for Children share their expertise through academic affiliations at noteworthy institutions and by providing opportunities for post-doctoral researchers.

Shriners Hospitals for Children depends on donations to fund its research programs. For information on ways you can support this effort, visit www.donate2SHC.org.