

# What is a Pediatric Emergency Physician?

A *Pediatric Emergency Physician* is a specialist in the care of children and teens who are acutely ill or injured. A pediatric emergency physician is trained to care for a wide range of problems that require immediate medical help. These problems are often serious and may be life-threatening.

Your pediatrician may call on a pediatric emergency physician to help if your child has an acute illness or injury or special health care needs that require urgent assistance.

Pediatric emergency physicians have expertise in all of the following areas:

- Dealing with medical emergencies. (These often require special techniques and procedures.)
- Providing treatment that meets the unique medical needs of infants, children, teens, and young adults. This includes giving medications and using special equipment in specific ways.
- Detecting problems in children who are unable to be patient and cooperative.
- Easing the pain and anxiety that a medical emergency can cause families.
- Research and education in pediatric emergency medicine.

## What kind of training do pediatric emergency physicians have?

Pediatric emergency physicians are medical doctors who have had

- At least 4 years of medical school
- Three or more years of residency training in either pediatrics or emergency medicine
- Two or more years of fellowship training in pediatric emergency medicine
- Certification by either the American Board of Pediatrics or the American Board of Emergency Medicine as specialists in pediatric emergency medicine

## What types of treatments do pediatric emergency physicians provide?

Pediatric emergency physicians are experienced in the diagnosis and treatment of all types of emergencies in infants, children, teens, and young adults. They usually treat the following types of emergencies:

- Acute medical problems such as high or persistent fever, severe infections, difficulty breathing, severe pain, dehydration, seizures, and severe allergic reactions
- Major injuries such as fractures, head injuries, burns, and conditions resulting from motor vehicle crashes, falls, or other incidents

- Poisonings and overdoses
- Severe complications of chronic illnesses such as asthma, diabetes, sickle cell disease, and congenital (ie, existing at birth) or other disabling disorders
- Minor injuries such as cuts, animal bites, sprains, and foreign bodies

## Where can I find a pediatric emergency physician?

Pediatric emergency physicians practice in a variety of emergency settings. They work in facilities that are specially equipped to offer emergency care for children and teens. These may include the emergency departments of children's hospitals, teaching hospitals, community hospitals, and pediatric urgent care centers.

Because emergencies are unplanned, talk with your child's pediatrician to best decide what will be the best care for an unplanned illness or injury.

The American Academy of Pediatrics strongly supports that your child should receive the best care during emergencies. Ask your child's pediatrician to help you plan what to do if your child has an emergency.

The information contained in this publication should not be used as a substitute for the medical care and advice of your pediatrician. There may be variations in treatment that your pediatrician may recommend based on individual facts and circumstances.

From your doctor

American Academy  
of Pediatrics



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