



## ***Shriners Hospitals for Children is Dedicated to Spinal Cord Injury Rehabilitation***



**Sustaining a spinal cord injury (SCI) can be a frightening, overwhelming experience. 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, and approximately 10 percent affect children under age 16. Automobile crashes are the leading cause of spinal cord injury.

In addition to providing expert medical and rehabilitative care for a patient with a spinal cord injury, it is critically important for caregivers to be aware of and meet the developmental, social and educational needs of children and adolescents with these injuries in order to ensure they have the best opportunity for a full, satisfying life. Accordingly, in the mid-1980s, Shriners Hospitals for Children® established the nation's first spinal cord injury rehabilitation and management 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 interdisciplinary, offering each patient a complete, easily accessible care program. The treatment team includes a variety of surgeons and other physicians, nurses, therapists, therapeutic recreation specialists, psychologists, social workers, and dieticians.

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. Both of these therapies provide weight-bearing opportunities and can help stimulate muscles and build strength and stamina. Some of our hospitals also offer robotic assisted gait training via the ReWalk exoskeleton system.

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.

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 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 prestigious 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 the health care system provides this expert care regardless of a family's ability to pay, the organization depends on the generosity of donors to support its mission of caring for children. To learn how you can help, please visit [donate2SHC.org](https://donate2SHC.org).

For more information about Shriners Hospitals for Children, please visit [shrinershospitalsforchildren.org](https://shrinershospitalsforchildren.org).



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