

# What is a Pediatric Endocrinologist?

If your child has problems with growth, puberty, diabetes, or other disorders related to the hormones and the glands that produce them, a *Pediatric Endocrinologist* may treat your child.

Hormones are chemicals that affect how other parts of the body work. For example, hormones decide how a child grows and matures. Endocrine glands, such as the pituitary gland, release hormones into the bloodstream. Endocrinology is the science that studies these glands and the effects of the hormones.

Problems seen by pediatric endocrinologists are often quite different from those commonly seen by endocrinologists who care for adults. Special training in pediatric conditions as they relate to growth and development is important. Hormonal problems are often present for life. Pediatric endocrinologists deal with hormone disorders at all stages of childhood and the teen years.

## What kind of training do pediatric endocrinologists have?

Pediatric endocrinologists are medical doctors who have had

- Four years of medical school
- Three years of pediatric residency
- Three or more years of fellowship training in pediatric endocrinology

## What types of treatment do pediatric endocrinologists provide?

Pediatric endocrinologists diagnose, treat, and manage hormonal disorders including the following:

- Growth problems, such as short stature
- Early or delayed puberty
- Enlarged thyroid gland (goiter)
- Underactive or overactive thyroid gland
- Pituitary gland hypo/hyper function
- Adrenal gland hypo/hyper function
- Ambiguous genitals/intersex
- Ovarian and testicular dysfunction

- Diabetes
- Low blood sugar (hypoglycemia)
- Obesity
- Problems with Vitamin D (rickets, hypocalcemia)

## Where can I find a pediatric endocrinologist?

Pediatric endocrinologists practice in a variety of medical settings including children's hospitals, university medical centers, large community hospitals, as well as private offices throughout the country. Your pediatrician can help you find a board-certified endocrinologist.

## Pediatric endocrinologists—the best care for children

Children are not just small adults. As growing individuals they have special needs related to growth and development. In addition, their psychological needs are different from those of adults. Hormone problems affecting growth or sexual development can have significant effects on a child's physical and emotional well-being. Pediatric endocrinologists are sensitive to these issues.

A pediatric endocrinologist cares for your child in a setting that is appropriate for children and teens. Support personnel, including nurses, psychologists, pediatric diabetes educators, and nutritionists, are all attuned to the needs of children and teens.

Children with special needs require that pediatric endocrinologists work closely with primary care pediatricians to provide coordinated and comprehensive care. Pediatric endocrinologists have extensive training and expertise in dealing with children and in treating children with endocrine disorders and hormonal problems.

If your pediatrician suggests that your child see a pediatric endocrinologist, you can be assured that your child will receive the best possible care.

American Academy of Pediatrics

DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN™



The American Academy of Pediatrics expresses its appreciation to all those who contributed to this brochure, including Janet Silverstein, MD, who served as principal medical reviewer, and the Section on Endocrinology.

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.

Copyright ©2003  
5-517/0203