

GASTROENTEROLOGY, HEPATOLOGY AND NUTRITION



Every year, more than 15,000 families turn to the Division of Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition at Children's Hospital Los Angeles. As one of the top GI programs in the nation, the Division is renowned for its comprehensive approach to caring for young patients with gastrointestinal, liver and nutritional disorders and its leading research program that is at the forefront of developing and testing new treatment options.

The Division's expertise covers the full spectrum of conditions, from acute or chronic liver disease and ulcerative colitis to intestinal failure and pancreatitis. Due to the complexity of these disorders, the Division collaborates with other CHLA specialists on coordinated treatment plans to streamline care and address each patient's unique needs.

PROGRAMS AND CENTERS

Liver Transplant Program

With more than 20 years of pediatric liver transplant expertise, our specialists have performed 425 pediatric liver transplants and counting. In 2021, our experts completed 31 pediatric liver transplants—the most in the Western United States—and successfully performed the first combined heart-liver transplant. The Liver Transplant Program's median wait time for a transplant is approximately 2.6 months compared to the regional and national wait times of 30.5 and 13.5 months, respectively and the program has a nearly 95% three-year survival rate.

Aerodigestive Program

The Division houses the only multidisciplinary clinic focused on caring for children with complex breathing and feeding disorders in the Greater Los Angeles region. Patients have access to specialists in gastroenterology, otolaryngology/ENT, pulmonology, pediatric surgery, anesthesiology, nutrition, and speech and language pathology.

Inflammatory Bowel Disease Medical and Surgical Program

Children with inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) have specific medical needs, which the Inflammatory Bowel Disease Medical and Surgical Program addresses using the latest therapies. CHLA is one of a handful of hospitals around the country that offer fecal microbial transplant, which has shown promising results.

Motility Disorders Program

When something goes awry in a child's digestive tract, the side effects can impair everyday life. Abdominal pain, constipation, bloating, nausea or vomiting can cause physical and emotional stress for patients and their families. The Division specializes in gastrointestinal motility disorders, which require advanced testing modalities. Experts use a suite of diagnostic tools and tests to evaluate the strength and functionality of certain muscles to create treatment plans based on each patient's unique condition. In addition, CHLA scientists are on the leading-edge of research for motility conditions like Hirschsprung's disease, using stem cells to grow healthy new gut tissue.

ACCOLADES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

The Division is one of the most successful programs of its kind in the United States and a major referral center for families whose children require specialized GI, liver or nutritional care.

- The Division has been consistently recognized as a top 10 gastroenterology and GI surgery program on U.S. News & World Report's annual rankings of the best children's hospitals.
- The Liver Transplant Program is one of the top three living-donor liver transplant centers in the country; close to 35% of transplants are from living donors. Additionally, the program has a nearly 95% three-year survival rate for pediatric liver transplants, above the national average of 93%.
- The Division was one of the first centers in the nation to use non-sedated transnasal GI endoscopy. Unlike traditional endoscopies that require patients to abstain from food and water for hours before the procedure, undergo general anesthesia, and spend several hours in the hospital, a non-sedated transnasal endoscopy can be performed while children are awake and allows them to return home much sooner.
- CHLA is home to the largest pediatric home parenteral nutrition program in the Western U.S. The Division's Intestinal Rehabilitation and Nutrition Support Program helps patients of all ages, from infants to adolescents, who have nutritional problems related to GI disorders, including intestinal failure. Gastroenterologists, surgeons, nurses, dietitians, social workers and occupational therapists collaborate to ensure a smooth transition from the hospital to home.
- The Division's physician-researchers are involved in leading research organizations, including the National Institutes of Health's Childhood Liver Disease Network and the Studies in Pediatric Liver Transplantation Consortium. Both groups bring together investigators from institutions around the world to collaborate on improving outcomes for patients with liver disease.
- CHLA is one of only four centers in the U.S. to offer four advanced training programs in pediatric gastroenterology subspecialties, including IBD, intestinal rehabilitation, liver transplant and motility—a testament to the Division's expertise and renowned faculty.

REFERRALS, ADMISSIONS AND TRANSPORT SERVICES

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