Referral to Pediatric Surgical Specialists


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The American Academy of Pediatrics, with the collaboration of the Surgical Sections of the American Academy of Pediatrics, has created referral recommendations intended to serve as voluntary practice parameters to assist general pediatricians in determining when and to whom to refer their patients for pediatric surgical specialty care. It is recognized that these recommendations may be difficult to implement, because communities vary in terms of access to major pediatric medical centers. Limited access does not negate the value of the recommendations, however, because the child who needs specialized surgical and anesthetic care is best served by the skills of the appropriate pediatric surgical team. Major congenital anomalies, malignancies, major trauma, and chronic illnesses (including those associated with preterm birth) in infants and children should be managed by pediatric medical subspecialists and pediatric surgical specialists at pediatric referral centers that can provide expertise in many areas, including the pediatric medical subspecialties and surgical specialties of pediatric radiology, pediatric anesthesiology, pediatric pathology, and pediatric intensive care. The optimal management of the child with complex problems, chronic illness, or disabilities requires coordination, communication, and cooperation of the pediatric surgical specialist with the child's primary care pediatrician or physician.