

Ready to start planning your care? Call us at [800-525-2225](tel:800-525-2225) to make an appointment.

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Memorial Sloan Kettering
Cancer Center

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Pediatric surgeon Michael La Quaglia is one of MSK Kids' experts in complex surgeries on cancers in children.

Children's cancer surgery

Find a Pediatric Surgery Expert

Surgeons at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center treat more children with cancer than any other medical center in the world.

[Learn more](#) →

At Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center (MSK), our [surgeons](#) do some 2,500 procedures each year for people under age 18 with cancer. They also do about 800 surgeries on young adults with pediatric cancers.

Few cancer surgery specialists do so many children's cancer surgeries a year. MSK surgeons have the experience to know when they can treat cancers that other specialists will not operate on.

Learning your child needs surgery can make you feel scared and worried. From your first consultation, our care teams help families like yours through every step of this cancer [experience](#).

MSK earned a National Distinction in children's cancer surgery

MSK is the country's first hospital to earn special recognition from the American College of Surgeons. MSK Kids is a [Level I Specialty Children's Center in Oncology](#). We're a top hospital nationally for our commitment to the best surgical cancer care for kids, teens, and young adults.

What does having this national honor in children's cancer surgery mean?

It means we meet the highest quality standards for surgical care for young patients. MSK meets these high standards for special hospitals that treat children and adolescents who need surgery for cancer and related conditions. The Children's Surgery Verification Quality Improvement Program, known as the CSV Program, sets these standards.

Types of children's cancers treated with surgery

Children's cancer surgery is done at MSK in New York City. People come to us from across the country and around the world for treatment. Led by [Pediatric Surgery Service Chief J. Ted Gerstle](#), our surgeons are very experienced in complex surgeries.

Our surgery team is highly skilled in treating many pediatric tumors, including [very rare solid tumors in children](#). We treat:

[Pediatric brain tumors](#)

[Osteosarcomas](#) (bone cancer)

[Retinoblastoma](#) (pediatric cancer of the eye)

[Desmoplastic small round cell tumors](#) and other soft tissue sarcomas

[Wilms' tumor](#)

[Liver tumors](#)

[Neuroblastoma](#)

[Pediatric colorectal cancer](#)

[Pediatric head and neck cancers](#)

Minimally invasive cancer surgery in children and teens

In some cases, we can offer minimally invasive procedures. We use methods such as small incisions (cuts), tiny cameras, and very thin instruments.

The benefits of minimally invasive surgery include:

Less pain after the procedure

A shorter hospital stay

A shorter time to recover

Your child can return sooner to school and the activities they enjoy.

Less harm from surgery

Your MSK Kids cancer surgery team aims to remove cancer safely with less harm to your child's body. When we can, we use surgery methods that do not change normal activities for your child's body.

Here are some of the methods we offer:

Limb preservation (surgery to save an arm or leg)

We treat children with sarcomas, including bone cancer, with the goal of keeping the arm or leg. If a child needs amputation, we use the latest methods that can keep them active, and even athletic.

Minimally invasive endoscopic neurosurgery to remove some brain tumors

We may be able to remove a brain tumor through the nostrils, without making any incisions on the outside.

Saving vision after retinoblastoma

Methods include chemotherapy given right into the eye, laser therapy, and cryotherapy to freeze smaller tumors. Our doctors can also place radioactive discs into the eye to kill tumor cells.

Why choose MSK Kids for your child's cancer surgery?

A team of many experts

[Our children's cancer surgeons](#) work with many other MSK experts in diagnosing and treating cancer. Together they find the best treatment for your child, with the fewest side effects.

The best surgeon for each operation

MSK Kids will always choose the best surgery team for the kind of cancer your child has. Sometimes that means an adult surgeon will join the team to do the surgery. This may happen because that cancer may be very rare in children. Examples include head and neck cancers, and colorectal cancers.

Surgeons who are experts in that kind of cancer can treat both adults and children. In fact, our cancer surgeons have more experience with these operations than some general surgeons at children's hospitals elsewhere.

Treatment targeted at the tumor

We work with MSK [pathology experts who study a tumor](#) to learn if it is growing fast or slowly. We may do tests to [learn more about the tumor's genetics](#). This information helps tell us if surgery is needed, or if the tumor may shrink on its own. We may also learn if therapies before an operation may make the surgery easier and more successful.

We make sure young people who do not need chemotherapy and radiation therapy are spared from treatment side effects. If the cancer is aggressive, we may choose a therapy that matches the tumor's

threat.

Keeping your child comfortable

“Will it hurt?” is a question we often hear when a child’s care includes surgery. Our care teams include experts in pain management. They will try their best to make your child comfortable before, during, and after surgery.

Make an appointment

To learn more about children’s cancer surgery at MSK, call us at [833-MSK-KIDS](tel:833-MSK-KIDS). We’re available Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. (Eastern time). You can [make an appointment](#) and ask about insurance or other topics.

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