

# HERO NEWS

## Changing Lives with pediatric surgery and anesthesia care



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Right: Dr. Stephen Langley in the operating room.



was nibbling on a pastry when she came out of surgery – it took 15 minutes.” Natalia had a second laser treatment in December. “We left the hospital by noon and went out to lunch,” said Christa. One more treatment is scheduled for April, and Dr. Krol can do more treatments if necessary to make sure Natalia starts school with a normal appearance.

“I think she’s going to do great,” said Christa. “We were fortunate to be referred to Dr. MacArthur, who is absolutely wonderful. We know other parents who were not as fortunate. It makes such a difference to go to the right specialist.”

### **Pediatric Surgeries Create Bright Futures – and Lifetime Connections**

Doernbecher patients and parents are not the only ones whose lives are changed by treatment. Doctors often form lifelong bonds with the children they treat. Dr. Nate Selden, who worked with Dr. Anna Kuang to repair Jay Tomaszewski’s facial clefting, said, “I’ve been treating kids long enough to get wedding invitations now.” He added, “Every Thanksgiving, I get an email from a doctor whose child I treated for a rare brain tumor. It was at the base of his brain and very difficult to treat – one of the most complex brain surgeries we do. This year, he told me his son is starting medical school.”

On September 11, 2001, Dr. Selden remembered, “The first phone call I got was from that father. He and his family were overseas, but worried about what was happening in the United States. He called to make sure my family and I were OK.”

Mark Silen, M.D., M.B.A., Doernbecher’s chief of pediatric surgery, agreed. “When you’re treating kids, the return on your investment is amazing,” he said. “Every year, I get Christmas cards from parents and from kids I’ve been privileged to see grow up. To paraphrase the credit card commercial: priceless.”

The skill of Doernbecher’s pediatric surgeons is meeting a real need in Oregon and southwest Washington. Over the past five years, the surgeons at Doernbecher have treated almost 40 percent more kids, including an additional increase of more than 6 percent in 2009. This sustained rate of growth makes Doernbecher supporters more important than ever.

In response to the community need, the Doernbecher Foundation

is launching a campaign to ensure that the surgeons at Doernbecher have the ability to provide the children of Oregon and southwest Washington with the latest and most innovative treatment options without having to leave the region. By expanding the surgical facilities and enhancing the technology and equipment available in the operating rooms, Doernbecher’s surgical specialists can treat the growing number of kids who need pediatric surgery so they can continue living longer, better lives.



## Pediatric Anesthesia Care and Pain Management at Doernbecher

Whether they're treated for cancer, trauma or rare birth defects, Doernbecher patients benefit from multidisciplinary surgical teams. Because procedures can be painful, pediatric anesthesiologists are important members of those teams.

Jeffrey Koh, M.D., is chief of the Division of Pediatric Anesthesia at OHSU Doernbecher. He leads a team of experts who include anesthesiologists, nurses and psychologists specializing in pediatric anesthesia and pain management. "All our anesthesiologists are fellowship trained, with at least one year of extra training in pediatric anesthesia," said Dr. Koh. "Four of us are also board certified in pediatrics." Including two fellows, Doernbecher has 20 pediatric anesthesiologists available.

Children are more comfortable when anesthesia is tailored to their needs. "Unlike in the adult world, we don't insist that kids having elective surgery get an IV preoperatively," said Dr. Koh. "They may go to the operating room without an IV, and we'll put it in once they are asleep. Older kids who know they're not going to get stuck are usually relaxed."

Pediatric anesthesia is not just for surgery. Doernbecher's Sedation Service, a branch of the Division of Pediatric Anesthesia, provides pain management to patients all over the hospital, from the MRI scanner to the hematology-oncology clinic where patients with cancer have necessary – but painful – procedures such as lumbar punctures. "We help get them through with less anxiety and much less pain," Dr. Koh said.

Pediatric surgeons benefit from a skilled pediatric anesthesiologist who can keep patients comfortable and relaxed. "If a surgeon needs to place a chest tube, her first thought is calling the sedation service to make the procedure more comfortable for the child," said Dr. Koh. Sedation and pain management make procedures go more smoothly. "It's safer and more efficient if an anesthesiologist provides pain control while the surgeon does what she needs to do."

Pain control can include sophisticated nerve blocks that allow children to have procedures without general anesthesia. "There is a growing trend to use peripheral nerve blocks," said Dr. Koh. "If you have a foot operation, you might not need an epidural that numbs both legs. You can numb the lower part of one leg with effective pain control and less chance of side effects." Providing this type of targeted pain relief with trained pediatric anesthesiologists is another example of what sets Doernbecher apart from other institutions in the region.

The kids-only setting and expert teams also benefit patients. "We feel strongly that we can provide the best care in a facility that cares only for children," said Dr. Koh. "At Doernbecher the entire hospital, including the operating rooms, is designed with kids in mind. It's comfortable for children and parents." He added, "We know what concerns children, what scares them. We can address these issues directly because here, everyone from the facilities staff to the surgeon to the anesthesiologist understands pediatric patients. There's a synergy at Doernbecher that really benefits kids."

Dr. Jeffrey Koh (far right) and the Doernbecher anesthesia and pain management team keep children comfortable before surgery and during procedures.

