What is pediatric surgery?

Pediatric surgery is a comparatively young surgical field. An independent specialist in pediatric surgery has existed since 1992. Although there was a specialist in pediatric surgery in the GDR as early as 1955, a sub-specialization in pediatric surgery for surgeons in the Federal Republic was only possible since 1968.

The advanced training is regulated in the state-specific advanced training regulations and is based on the requirements of the German Medical Association. A further training period of at least 6 years is required to obtain the title of specialist doctor. During this time, in addition to basic surgical and pediatric knowledge, the entire spectrum of pediatric surgery in theory and practice must be learned.

The field of pediatric surgery is extremely diverse due to the subgroups included. In addition to the fields of general surgery, neurosurgery, plastic surgery, thoracic surgery, tumor surgery, trauma surgery and visceral surgery, a number of other disciplines such as gastroenterology, ear, nose and throat medicine, pediatric and adolescent medicine and urology are part of the daily work. It is important to pay attention to the special features of children and to appropriately adapted therapy strategies. In addition to treating the children, it is important to include the parents in the entire process in a suitable manner, to obtain consent and to do educational work.

From our point of view, pediatric surgery is the most fascinating subject in medicine! We pediatric surgeons look after children and adolescents of all age groups – and that “from curls to socks”. While the other surgical disciplines are broadly divided (trauma surgery, “abdominal” surgery, “lung” surgery, urology, operative gynecology, etc.), pediatric surgery encompasses almost all surgical diseases in people up to the age of 16.

The focus of the work of the pediatric surgeon is undoubtedly the correction of congenital malformations. But even premature babies from the 24th week of pregnancy with a body “weight” of almost 500 grams often have serious illnesses that can only be treated surgically. Up to the first year of life, all children should definitely be operated on by a children’s surgeon. Of course, we are of the opinion that beyond the first year of life, all conditions (environment, anesthesia, care, surgeon) must be tailored to the patient and recommend visiting a pediatric medicine facility well into adolescence.

Pediatric trauma surgery (pediatric trauma) is also a focus of pediatric surgeons and a real specialty because the growing skeleton has a number of peculiarities that the attending physician must take into account. Even the assessment of an X-ray image of the child has to be learned and trained, because the cartilaginous growth plates can lead to confusion and misdiagnosis.