

Southwest Florida Healthcare

Helping Kids Heal

Pediatric Orthopedics of SW FL treats common childhood orthopedic conditions like scoliosis and clubfoot with state-of-the-art effectiveness—and a little fun.

At Pediatric Orthopedics of SW FL, specialized providers have dedicated their careers to delivering the care best suited for the smallest patients.

“Pediatric patients aren’t just little adults,” says Kristin Cola, D.O., who knew since childhood she was destined for a career in medicine. “It’s important to seek a pediatric specialist for orthopedic issues because this is a dynamic field of medicine that is always changing with new research. When formulating a treatment plan, you also must consider the age of the patient and their growth plates, something a pediatric specialist is trained to do.”

One recent advancement is in the treatment of clubfoot, a condition that affects approximately one in 1,000 live births. Previous standards relied on invasive surgery, but research showed over time that children developed pain and restriction in later years. Today, thanks to a new casting technique developed by Dr. Ignacio Ponseti, up to 90% of children are treated without comprehensive surgical release.

“The Ponseti technique involves a series of casts and sometimes a small, in-office procedure on the Achilles tendon,” explains Dr. Cola. “Many patients go on to have no limitations in later years. They can walk, run, dance, and play sports. When parents come in feeling defeated, we can give them hope.”

Spinal Strategies

Scoliosis is the most common pediatric

spinal abnormality, affecting about 3% of the population. Once diagnosed, patients are monitored for disease progression. If the patient qualifies, bracing techniques are a research-proven, nonoperative treatment. The Schroth Method has shown promising results for noninvasive treatment.

“We want to avoid surgery if possible,” says Dr. Cola. “Studying the research of these conditions is like our crystal ball. It can help us predict how kids’ conditions might affect them as adults and can inform our treatment plans.”

The practice also treats kyphosis (a “hunchback” deformity) and spondylolysis, stress fractures common in athletes.

Local Pediatric Specialists

When asked what makes an excellent pediatric orthopedist, Dr. Cola responds, “Compassion, patience, and creativity.” It’s a formula she and her colleagues at Pediatric Orthopedics of SW FL embrace wholeheartedly. From stickers and cast art to lighthearted communication and treating each young patient with dignity, the practice makes a concerted effort to make every family feel seen.

“We involve the children in the conversation and give them time to process. If the child is happy, the parent is happy,” Dr. Cola says.

Much of the practice’s caseload involves typical childhood injuries, but the team also includes specialists in cerebral palsy; hip, foot, ankle, and spinal conditions; congenital hand



deformities; and a full range of sports medicine. While all four surgeons in the practice take care of all conditions, Amy Harlow, M.D., specializes in neuromuscular and hip conditions, while Brett Shannon, D.O., and Jordan Vokes, M.D., specialize in sports medicine.

“I want our community to know that we’re local, we’re specialty trained, and we care deeply about helping our patients heal,” says Dr. Cola. “I love working with children because they make every day fun. They really want to get better, and they’re so grateful when they do.”



15821 Hollyfern Court
Fort Myers, FL 33908

3361 Pine Ridge Road, Suite 202
Naples, FL 34109

239-432-5100 | pedsortho.net



F. Brett Shannon, D.O.; Kristin M. Cola, D.O.; Amy J. Harlow, M.D.; and Jordan R. Vokes, M.D.