If your child is diagnosed with slipped capital femoral epiphysis (SCFE), our Orthopaedics and Strong4Life programs will work together to make sure he receives the care he needs. Experts from both programs can help treat the disorder while promoting a healthier lifestyle.

What is SCFE?
SCFE is a hip condition that affects kids during growth spurts. The head (or “ball”) of the thigh bone slips off the neck of the bone, like a scoop of ice cream slipping off a cone. Boys are affected more often than girls. In a lot of cases, both hips are affected.

The cause of SCFE is unknown, but there are risk factors that increase the likelihood of it. They include:
- Being overweight
- Medications
- Thyroid problems
- Radiation treatment
- Chemotherapy
- Bone problems related to kidney disease

Of all the listed risk factors, SCFE is most commonly associated with being overweight.

Most cases of SCFE happen gradually and are called chronic or stable. In other cases, the ball will suddenly slip, causing enough pain to keep kids from being able to walk. These cases are called acute or unstable, and they may have a worse outcome over time.

What are the symptoms, diagnosis and treatment?

Symptoms
The typical child with SCFE may feel pain or discomfort in his hip, thigh or knee for several weeks or months and walk with a limp. In more severe cases, the child will be unable to bear any weight on the affected leg. This can often be the result of an acute slip. In both cases, the affected leg may also turn outward or appear to be shorter.

Diagnosis
A thorough physical examination by a pediatric-trained doctor can help diagnose SCFE by showing that the hip does not have full range of motion. The child may also need an X-ray and possibly magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) to confirm the diagnosis.
**Treatment**

Treatment for SCFE should happen immediately. Surgery is required to prevent the head of the thigh bone from slipping more until the growth plate closes. This involves placing a metal screw into the bone to hold the femoral head in place.

After surgery, kids will use crutches, a walker or a wheelchair to help protect the hip while it is healing. Once approved by the surgeon, physical therapy may be necessary to help strengthen the hip and leg muscles. Our physical therapists have experience in working with children and helping them recover from pediatric injuries and disorders.

**We can help**

We have a special program for children whose SCFE is related to obesity or excess weight. The Children’s Strong4Life Clinic, part of the Strong4Life wellness movement, is dedicated to treating children who are overweight. Your doctor may recommend that your child becomes involved with Strong4Life. Patients can be seen in a clinic setting by a multidisciplinary team that includes:
- Doctors
- Physician assistants
- Dietitians
- Psychologists
- Exercise physiologists

The team will work with your child and your family to develop personalized physical activity, nutrition and behavior plans. The goal of these plans is to treat children who are overweight and promote a healthier lifestyle.

If necessary, our team will work with orthopaedic doctors to treat your child. Our Orthopaedics Program provides specialized care for children that need surgical and medical treatment for a variety of injuries, disorders and conditions.

Visit [choa.org/strong4lifeclinic](http://choa.org/strong4lifeclinic) or call [404-785-1535](tel:404-785-1535) for more information about our Strong4Life Clinic.

Visit [choa.org/orthopaedics](http://choa.org/orthopaedics) for more information on our Orthopaedics Program.

Some physicians and affiliated healthcare professionals on the Children’s Healthcare of Atlanta team are independent providers and are not our employees.

Children’s Healthcare of Atlanta launched Strong4Life, a wellness movement designed to ignite societal change and reverse the epidemic of childhood obesity and its associated diseases in Georgia. Strong4Life reaches families through public awareness, policy change efforts, school programs, healthcare provider programs, community partnerships and more. For more information, visit Strong4Life.com.