BEST TIMINGS OF SURGERY FOR THE COMMONER PAEDIATRIC SURGICAL PROCEDURES

Dear Editor,

The timing of surgery is the most important factor governing the outcome of surgical correction in paediatric surgery. The concerned parents are worried and apprehensive. They want to know how long they should wait? Whether their child will become all right without treatment or if operation is required then at what age he or

she should be operated? Even the general practitioners are sometimes not able to answer the queries of worried parents. Here are some of the best timings of surgery for the commoner paediatric surgical procedures.

Surgical condition	Optimum timing of surgery
I. Head and Neck and Neurosurgery	
1. Spina bifida aperta	At birth
2. Spina bifida occulta	At diagnosis
3. Hydrocephalus	At diagnosis
4. Craniosynostosis	At diagnosis
5. Encephalocele	At birth
6. Cleft lip	3 months
7. Cleft palate	18 months
8. Ranula	At diagnosis
9. Torticollis/Sternomastoid tumour	After 15 months age, earlier only if hemihypoplasia of face
II. Thoracic	
1. Esophageal atresia with or without TEF	At birth
2. Congenital Diaphragmatic hernia	At birth after hemodynamic and metabolic Stabilization
3. Eventration diaphragm	At diagnosis
4. Congenital lobar emphysema	At diagnosis
5. Forgut duplications	At diagnosis
6. Tumours (neuroblastoma, teratoma etc.)	At diagnosis
7. Gynaecomastia (idiopathic in boys)	After puberty - if at all indicated
8. Tracheo-bronchial foreign bodies	At diagnosis
III. Abdominal	
1. Umbilical drainage:	
(a) Persistent Vitello-intestinal duct	At diagnosis
(b) Persistent urachus	At diagnosis
(c) Sinuses	At diagnosis
2. Umbilical masses	
(a) granuloma	Non-operative chemical cautery
(b) polyp	At diagnosis
(c) urachal cyst	At diagnosis
3. Umbilical hernia	3 years, unless obstructed/strangulated
4. Inguinal hernia	At diagnosis
5. Hydrocele	2 years, earlier if associated with hernia or hernia can not be excluded with certainty
6. Undescended testis	1 year
7. Retractable testis	No surgery
8. Gastroschisis	At birth
9. Exomphalos	
(a) Minor	At birth
(b) minor with ruptured membrane	At birth
(c) major with intact membrane	At birth or conservative at birth then ventral hernia repair at 6-9 months age

Surgical condition	Optimum timing of surgery
10. Anorectal malformation	
(a) High and intermediate	Colostomy at birth, definitive operation at 10 kg weight
(b) Low anomalies	At birth
11. Hirschsprung's disease	Colostomy at diagnosis, definitive operation at 10 kg weight
12. Biliary atresia	After 14 days age or before 6 weeks of age
13. Choledochal cyst	At diagnosis
14. Infantile hypertrophic pyloric stenosis	At diagnosis, after correction of electrolyte imbalance
15. Malrotation	At diagnosis
IV Urology	
1. Exstrophy bladder	
(a) Closure	At birth
(b) Continence and anti-reflux surgery	3-5 years age
(c) Epispadias	1 year after above
2. Hypospadias	Complete all stages before school age
3. Pelviureteric obstruction	At diagnosis
4. Vesicoureteric reflux	After 1-2 year age
5. Intra-abdominal tumours (Wilms' neuroblastoma)	At diagnosis or after pre-op. Chemotherapy if inoperable at diagnosis
V. Miscellaneous	
1. Meningomyelocele with thin sac and exposed neural plaque	As early as possible
2. Congenital hydrocephalus	As early as possible
3. Patent ductus arteriosis	As early as possible
4. Sacrococcygeal teratoma	Within 2 weeks after birth
5. Ambiguous genitalia	Gender assignment within 24 hours, corrective surgery later on
6. Posterior Sagittal Anorectoplasty (PSARP) in supralevator anorectal malformation	8-10 months
7. Transposition of anus in vestibular anus	3-4 months
8. Definitive surgery (Duhamel) in Hirschsprung' disease	12-15 months or 6-8 months after colostomy
9. Haemangioma	5-6 years
10. Syndactyly	1-2 years
11. Ventricular and atrial septal defects	5-6 years
12. Coarctation of aorta	5-6 years
13. Congenital dislocation of hip	In first week after birth
14. Talipes equino varus	In first week after birth
15. Tongue tie	10-12 months

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