



PETER SUN, M.D.
 Pediatric Neurosurgeon

If operating room hours earned airline frequent flier miles, then Peter Sun would be able to fly to the moon. That is because as the only staff neurosurgeon at Children's Hospital and Research Center Oakland, Sun logs about a thousand hours a year operating on children's brains.

Born in Taiwan to Chinese parents, Sun says he's known since he was a child growing up in Los Angeles that the brain and nervous system held a particular allure for him. By the time he had to decide between internal medicine and surgery in medical school at Columbia University, Sun knew that working with his hands and getting immediate results meant neurosurgery was where he was headed.

"I like delicate work," says Sun. "Some of the complex brain tumors that we get require meticulous dissections, and we have to spend time avoiding critical structures. These require very patient dissections that benefit my personality."

While Sun says brain tumors are fairly common, he also does more than 300 operations a year on congenital brain and spinal problems, skull abnormalities, vascular problems, trauma and cancer.

While the vast majority of conditions Sun operates on are dramatically fixed by surgery, the hardest parts of his job is giving bad news to families about things he can't cure. Another taxing part is spending long hours away from his wife and two young sons.

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