



Ahead of the Curve

Scoliosis is a musculoskeletal disorder that causes an abnormal curvature of the spine or backbone, sometimes resembling an “S” or a “C,” rather than a straight line. There are different types of scoliosis, including:

- Idiopathic scoliosis—the most common type. The cause is unknown; generally the condition occurs in children after the age of 10. Girls have a greater likelihood to develop idiopathic scoliosis.
- Juvenile idiopathic scoliosis—affects children between the ages of 3 and 10.
- Infantile idiopathic scoliosis—occurs in children younger than age 3.

SYMPTOMS OF SCOLIOSIS

Because scoliosis can be hereditary, experts recommend children who have a parent or sibling diagnosed with idiopathic scoliosis receive regular checkups for early detection. Children and teens with scoliosis rarely exhibit symptoms and sometimes the condition is not obvious until the curvature of the spine becomes severe. You may notice that your child’s clothes are not fitting correctly or that hems are not hanging evenly. In some cases, your child’s spine may appear crooked or their ribs may protrude. Common indicators to watch for include:

- One shoulder may appear higher than the other.
- One shoulder blade may stick out farther than the other.
- One hip may appear higher than the other.
- The child’s head is not properly centered over their body.
- When the child bends from the waist, the ribs on one side are higher.
- The waistline may appear flat on one side.

SCOLIOSIS TREATMENTS OFFERED

Shriners Hospitals for Children® offers a wide range of treatment options for scoliosis, tailored to the needs of each individual patient, including:

Observation

If the idiopathic curve is less than 25 degrees, physicians observe patients every four to six months while they are growing. Often, no treatment is needed.

Bracing

Most physicians recommend a patient be fitted for a brace to prevent a curve from worsening when the patient meets the following criteria:

- The child is still growing and has an idiopathic curve greater than 25 degrees.
- The child is expected to have significant growth and has an idiopathic curve between 20 and 40 degrees.
- The child is a female and has not had her first menstrual cycle.
- The child is still growing and shows an idiopathic curve between 20 and 29 degrees and is not improving.

As children near the end of their growth period, the specific indicators for bracing will depend upon how the curve affects their physical appearance, if the curve is getting worse and the size of the curve.

Surgical Options

There are several surgical options, including fusion and fusionless techniques that use a variety of different implant options.

EARLY DETECTION IS KEY

As there is often no known cause for scoliosis, early detection is the best way to prevent curve progression. To help with this, the orthopaedic specialists at Shriners Hospitals for Children developed the new app, SpineScreen.

The SpineScreen app allows you to perform a preliminary spine check on your child, in the comfort and privacy of your own home. It detects abnormal curves when the phone is moved along a child’s back, giving parents a quick way to routinely monitor their child’s spine. As this is strictly an initial check, it should be followed up by a doctor’s examination to determine if your child has scoliosis.

If your child does have scoliosis, Shriners Hospitals for Children may be able to help. Shriners Hospitals for Children is a trusted leader in scoliosis care, with comprehensive scoliosis treatment options available at 20 of its locations in North America.

To learn more about scoliosis, treatment options available and to download the SpineScreen app, please visit shrinershospitalsforchildren.org/scoliosis.



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