



What is Scoliosis?

Scoliosis (sko le o' sis) is an abnormal curve of the spine or "backbone." Most often it is first noticed in the pre-teen or teenage years. The spine begins to curve to one side or the other. Sometimes the hips or shoulders become uneven. Scoliosis is more common in girls than boys. Also, it tends to run in some families. The exact cause of scoliosis is not known.

Does my child have Scoliosis?

Starting in the fifth or sixth grades (ages 11-13 years) each child should be examined every year or two for scoliosis. This exam is often done in schools. Your child's doctor should also check for scoliosis at general check-up visits. X-rays may be needed.

Are there problems connected with Scoliosis?

Usually there are no problems with scoliosis. People with scoliosis rarely complain of any symptoms, not even back pain. In very severe scoliosis, some breathing problems may be noticed.

What is the treatment for Scoliosis?

In most cases the curve in the spine is so small that no treatment is necessary. Your child should be followed with regular exams and/or x-rays to be sure that the curve is not getting worse. Sometimes a fitted back brace is used to keep the spine from curving more. Braces today are much lighter and less bulky than those used in the past. Surgery may be needed for a curve that is more severe. This would include placing a rod in the spine to straighten it.

Talk with your doctor about questions you may have about scoliosis.