



# SCOLIOSIS



## ❖ IS SCOLIOSIS COMMON? ❖

There are approximately 3,000,000 people in the U.S. who are affected by scoliosis. Some scoliosis can be mild enough that treatment may never be necessary. Mild scoliosis occurs almost equally in boys and girls. More serious scoliosis occurs 5-8 times greater in girls than boys. Studies worldwide show a very even occurrence of scoliosis. There is virtually no variation of racial or ethnic incidence.

## ❖ HOW IS SCOLIOSIS NOTICED? ❖

One of the most common signs of scoliosis is a prominent shoulder blade, frequently the right shoulder blade. The hips can also seem uneven. Scoliosis should not be confused with poor posture. Scoliosis does not develop as a result of anything a child or their parents did or did not do. Carrying a heavy backpack does not cause scoliosis. Often the first sign of scoliosis is clothing not fitting correctly. When a female with scoliosis wears a skirt, the hemline is not straight.

## ❖ WHAT CAUSES SCOLIOSIS? ❖

There are many causes for scoliosis. 80-85% of cases are idiopathic, which means no known cause. Scoliosis many often run in families due to genetic or hereditary factors. Scoliosis may also be caused by muscle and nerve disorders, connective tissue disorders or chromosomal abnormalities. These causes are congenital, which means the scoliosis is caused by abnormalities in the formation of the vertebrae and are present at birth. Children's spines should be checked regularly for scoliosis until growth is complete. Scoliosis can progress considerably during the last major growth spurt.

## ❖ WHAT ARE TREATMENTS FOR SCOLIOSIS? ❖

There are currently no medications to treat scoliosis, nor can its onset be prevented. When scoliosis is detected, the doctor may refer the patient to an orthopedic spinal specialist for evaluation and treatment. This may consist of periodic examinations, including X-rays to determine if the curve is increasing in size. If scoliosis is identified early, large curves may often be prevented by wearing a brace. Severe curves may require surgical treatment.

## HOW TO SCREEN AT HOME

**Have your child facing away from you, in a bathing suit or underwear, with arms hanging down loosely.**

Is one shoulder higher than the other?

Is one shoulder blade more prominent?

Does one hip seem higher?

Is there a greater distance between the arms and the sides of the body on one side?

Is there a larger crease at one side of the waist?

Looking from the side- is their back excessively round?

**Have your child bend forward with the arms hanging down loosely.**

**The palms should be touching each other around knee level.**

**Look at your child in this position from the front, side and back.**

Is one side of the back higher than the other?

Is there any asymmetry in the back?

When looking from the side, is there a sharp change in the curvature of the back?

**If you have any "yes" answers or if the child has a brother, sister, parent or other close relative with scoliosis, consult your family doctor.**

**FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT THE SCOLIOSIS ASSOCIATION :**

☎ 800-800-0669    P.O. BOX 811705, Boca Raton, FL 33481-1705    🌐 [www.scoliosis-assoc.org](http://www.scoliosis-assoc.org)

You can receive information, help and referrals free of charge from the Scoliosis Association, Inc. The Association is a non-profit, tax-exempt organization that was founded by scoliosis patients and their families in 1974 and was incorporated in 1976. The Association has a wide range of materials available.