

SPINAL SCREENING FOR SCOLIOSIS

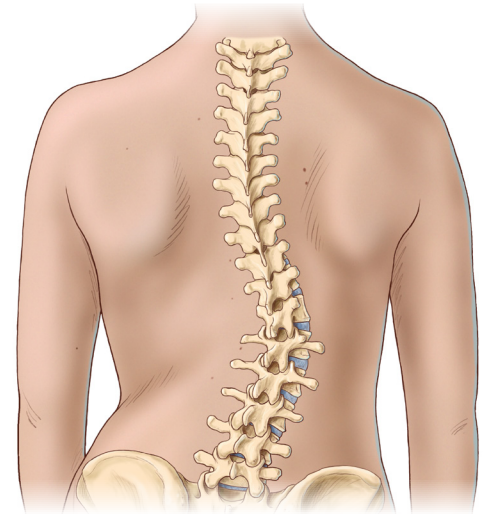
Scoliosis is an abnormal curve or twist of the spine. Approximately two to three percent of school-aged children have scoliosis. Less than one percent have curves that require treatment, but early detection for these is important. Since there are very few signs or symptoms in the early stages, screenings by pediatricians and school nurses are extremely important. At Scottish Rite for Children, we offer an all in-house, team-based approach, creating individualized treatment plans for our patients diagnosed with scoliosis.

When should my child be screened for scoliosis?

These screenings should begin in early adolescence so that treatment can start while the child is still growing. Pediatricians should check for early signs of abnormal spinal curves at each well-child visit. In addition, Texas school nurses conduct spinal screens for all students by the time they complete the 6th and 9th grades.

What is a spinal screen?

Typical screenings by pediatricians and school nurses include a quick look at the spine and ribs in both a standing and a bending forward position. If a screen is "positive" it means the clinician sees a sideways curve in the spine. In addition to the spine curving sideways, it also twists, making the ribs, which are attached to the spine, look uneven.



What happens when the screen suggests possible scoliosis?

When a child has a positive screening, X-rays of the spine are often recommended. X-ray images provide an accurate measurement of any and all curves. The images are ordered by your pediatrician or by the clinician to whom you are referred, either a doctor or nurse practitioner/physician assistant.

How is scoliosis treated?

Treatment depends on how big the curve is and how much growth is left. Some curves do not need treatment, and for some, bracing may be recommended. The curves are checked by the doctor or nurse practitioner/physician assistant as the child grows. With certain signs and symptoms surgery may be appropriate, but this is uncommon in healthy children.



Innovations at Scottish Rite for Children

Research at Scottish Rite for Children has shown that when a brace is the appropriate treatment, those who wear the brace as directed have a lower risk of needing surgery. Because of this, our braces often have a monitor to track when it is worn. Innovations in care, like the brace monitor, are what make Scottish Rite a leader in the field of pediatric and adolescent scoliosis.

If your child needs a follow-up appointment with a pediatric orthopedic specialist, request an appointment online or by calling 214-559-7400. Visit our website to learn more about scoliosis and our ongoing research.

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