

Scoliosis in Children and Adolescents

Your spine helps to hold your body in an upright position. Without the spine, you wouldn't be able to walk, play sports or run. If you were to look at yourself in the mirror sideways or look at a friend from the side, you will notice that their back isn't flat like a board. Instead, the spine will curve in and out between the lower part of the back and the neck. This is completely normal and everyone has these curves.

The problem for those who have scoliosis is that the spine will end up curving laterally – from one side to the other side if you look from the back. A lateral curvature is very common in adults and is simply a mild deviation from the mid-line. However, curvatures in children are more serious and require expert attention.

Scoliosis in Children and Adolescents Anatomy

Understanding your spine will help you understand more about a scoliosis. Your spine is composed of multiple small bones (vertebrae), which sit on top of each other. These vertebrae allow movement to the spine, but in providing this movement, they can rotate or side-flex.

A spinal cord runs through the middle of the vertebrae. Nerves come out from the spinal cord and form peripheral nerves which travel along various parts of the body, notably the arms and legs. A severe scoliosis can cause pinching to the nerves.

Discs sit between the vertebrae and these act as cushions or shock absorbers for the spinal joints.

How to Treat Scoliosis in Children and Adolescents:

1. Orthopedist Visit

If you do need to seek treatment, you will probably go to a special doctor known as an orthopedist that specializes in bones and how to treat the condition. They will begin by determining how severe the curve in the spine is. They will take x-rays and measure the degrees relating to the curve, similar to measuring an angle in math.

2. Physical Therapy

Specially trained therapists, and specialized clinics provide treatment for scoliosis. Manual therapy combined with exercise therapy can be very effective in reducing the scoliosis, or preventing it from getting any worse.

3. Bracing

Even though a brace isn't going to permanently correct any curve that is already there, it can help prevent the spine from getting worse. Some braces are only supposed to be worn at night, while others are meant to be worn during both the night and the day.

Tips:

- Exercise is encouraged to help minimize any decrease in functionality over the course of time.
- Remain physically fit and exercise on a regular basis to minimize pain and discomfort.
- Participating in sports can help.
- Teenagers who play a lot of golf can develop a scoliosis.