

# Scoliosis Basics: Families need to know

## **5 Facts About Scoliosis (from Johns Hopkins Medicine)**

1. Early diagnosis is key.
2. Most cases of scoliosis have no known cause.
3. Scoliosis runs in families.
4. Only a small percentage of scoliosis patients require treatment.
5. Surgery, if needed has good outcomes

### **What is scoliosis?**

Scoliosis is a common spine condition. There are several different types of scoliosis but idiopathic is the most common. It is curvature of the spine that can be defined in simple terms as an S or a C curve. They are defined as S and C because that is exactly the way the curves look. Most often, idiopathic scoliosis develops during the teenage years or even younger. Many cases don't require treatment except when the curve progresses rapidly which can cause different health problems. Early detection is very important to successful treatment. Scoliosis does not develop because of anything that a child or their parents did or didn't do. Scoliosis will not disappear as a child ages.

### **How Common is Scoliosis?**

Scoliosis is a common spine condition that can develop during a person's teenage years or even younger. Scoliosis affects 2-3 percent of the population, or an estimated six to ten million people in the United States in 2024. Scoliosis can develop in infancy or early childhood. Approximately 10% of the adolescent population has some degree of scoliosis. This means that about 2,300,000 youngsters in the United States alone have scoliosis. Approximately one-quarter of these will require attention. The primary age of onset for scoliosis is 10-15 years old, occurring equally among both genders. Females are eight times more likely to progress to a curve magnitude that requires treatment. Some scoliosis may be so mild that treatment may not be needed.

### **How is scoliosis identified?**

The most common identification is when a parent simply has a child bend over and look at the spine and the shoulders to see if there is unevenness. If there is, then the patient should be checked by a medical doctor. Parents should check their children regularly during teenage growth years. There are also other ways to check your child. If they have a shoulder higher than the other, one hip seems to be higher than the other, child's head is centered over the spine or tilted to one side, or if the child seems to lean to one side, this may be an indication of scoliosis.

### **Questions for Your Doctor**

1. We have noticed some signs of scoliosis in our child will you please check them?
2. If your doctor examines your child and thinks scoliosis is a possibility, you should ask for a spine x-ray.
3. You may want to take a picture of your child's bend test to compare with future screenings.

#### Questions Orthopedic Specialist

1. When the specialist reviews the x-ray, you may want to ask what type of curve it is and how large the curve is in degrees.
2. Ask about your child's skeletal maturity.
3. After reviewing the x-rays that were taken, you should ask about different treatment plans.

### **Treatments**

Treatments depend upon a variety of factors including the severity of the curve, skeletal maturity and the child's goals/activities. Some mild cases of scoliosis don't require treatment. For other cases, the treatment can range from bracing to physical therapy (like the Schroth Method), to different surgeries.

### **References:**

[Johns Hopkins- Scoliosis](#)

[National Scoliosis Foundation NIH Scoliosis](#)

[Adam's forward bend test Shriners Children's Hospital](#)