CAN SCOLIOSIS BE CURED?

There are no miracle cures for scoliosis. It can be effectively controlled and even corrected to some extent. Correction depends on many factors, including age of child, cause and severity of the curve, and how soon treatment is begun. Mild scoliosis may progress until the child stops growing. Moderate and severe deformities may continue to progress even after the skeleton has stopped growing and may require follow-up throughout life. Early identification and treatment will produce the best end result.

IS SCOLIOSIS HEREDITARY?

There is a tendency for idiopathic scoliosis to occur in families. If someone is diagnosed, it is a good practice to have other family members checked.

WHAT ARE THE PROBLEMS OF UNTREATED SCOLIOSIS?

Untreated scoliosis can cause:

- ▶ Pressure on vital organs (most commonly the heart and lungs), decreasing their capacity later in life.
- ▶ Back and joint pain later in life.
- ▶ Decreased flexibility to perform skilled tasks.
- ▶ Changes in appearance that can lead to emotional and psychological problems.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN ONE IS REFERRED FOR FOLLOW-UP AS POSSIBLY HAVING SCOLIOSIS?

The forward bending tests show only the possibility of a curve being present. A physician must then examine the back. X-rays of the back, taken in the standing position, may be used to make a definitive diagnosis.

There are generally three approaches to treatment:

1. A mild curve should be watched and x-rayed at regular intervals to make sure it is not increasing. X-ray examination of the spine is the only objective measurement of curve progression.
2. A mild curve which has been shown to be professing and moderate curves can be treated with spinal braces to stop progression when growth is completed.
3. A severe curve, or one not readily controlled by more conservative means, could be recommended for surgical correction.

Early detection and treatment is the key to possible prevention of serious spinal deformities.

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

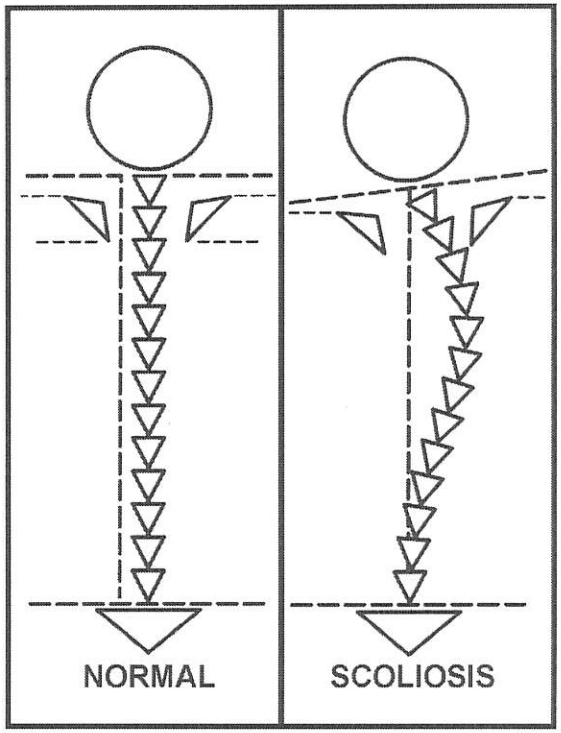
Edward G. Rendell, Governor

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:
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School Health Program
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SCOLIOSIS

HOW DOES IT AFFECT YOU?



WHAT IS SCOLIOSIS

- ▶ Scoliosis is a lateral and rotary curve of the spine.
- ▶ Normally the spine is straight when viewed from the back. In scoliosis,, the spine twists to the side, as seen in the above picture.

WHAT ARE THE CAUSES OF SCOLIOSIS?

- IDIOPATHIC – A curve that has no known cause. 70% of all scoliosis detected is idiopathic.
- CONGENITAL – A birth defect of the spine which occurs during the development of the body.
- NEUROMUSCULAR – A curve which results from a muscular imbalance in the back.
- INJURY TO THE SPINE

HOW IS SCOLIOSIS, USUALLY DETECTED?

- A family member may notice a high shoulder or hip, a protrusion of one side of the back or chest, difficulty in fitting slacks, or an uneven hem. These findings could indicate bad posture, but they might also indicate scoliosis.
- During physical exams by a physician
- The "Forward Bending Test," described in this pamphlet, is a simple way to detect scoliosis.
- Scoliosis should be detected before the curve progresses far enough to be noticed in the above ways. many times, if it is detected before the child reaches full bone growth, the curve can be reduced or kept from increasing without surgery. Annual screening programs, held in many school districts, are one of the best ways to detect scoliosis early.

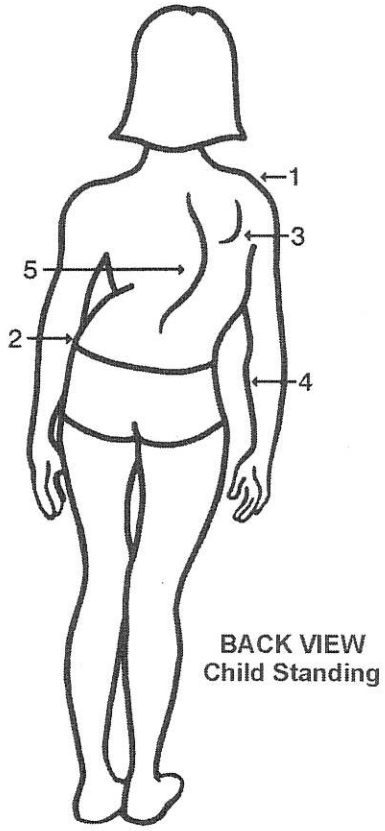
THE SIMPLE FORWARD BENDING TEST

When the child is in the standing position:

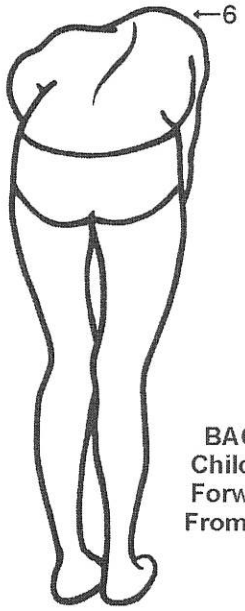
1. Are the shoulders level?
2. Are the hips level?
3. Is one shoulder blade more prominent than the other?
4. Are there unequal distances between the arms and the body?
5. Does the spine appear curved?

Have the child bend forward:

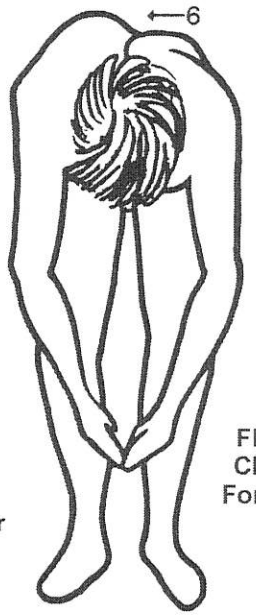
6. Is there a prominent hump on one side of the back when the child is bending forward?



BACK VIEW
Child Standing



BACK VIEW
Child Bending Forward Away From Examiner



FRONT VIEW
Child Bending Forward Toward Examiner

WHO IS MOST LIKELY TO HAVE IDIOPATHIC SCOLIOSIS?

- Severe scoliosis occurs in girls more frequently than in boys.
- Scoliosis is usually detected in the early stages around the age of eleven (sixth grade). Many children by that age are not taken for regular physical exams.
- Scoliosis is not rare. Many people are never aware that they have scoliosis. At the onset of the condition it is difficult to determine which causes will progress. Therefore, it is recommended that every person suspected of having a curve be examined by a physician.