



Parent Fact Sheet for Scoliosis

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Scoliosis is a sideways curvature of the spine. It occurs in otherwise healthy children and can be a serious health problem if it becomes severe. It generally occurs during the growing years, especially during the growth spurt from ten (10) to seventeen (17) years of age. Scoliosis is more frequently noted in females and when there are other affected family members. It is not caused by anything a child or his or her parents did or failed to do, although in some cases it can be associated with other medical conditions. Early detection is essential to help avoid complications that include back pain, fatigue, reduced exercise tolerance, deformity, and in severe cases, problems in heart and lung functions.

Treatment may involve bracing. Severe curves may require spinal surgery. The need for treatment is best determined by a trained medical professional. If you suspect your child may be affected, contact your physician or the school nurse.

Methods for early detection of scoliosis:

Direct your child to stand up straight, barefoot, with arms hanging freely at their sides. Boys should stand with shirts off; girls may wear tank-top.

1. Is one shoulder higher than the other?
2. Is one shoulder blade more prominent?
3. Does the spine seem to curve sideways?
4. Is one hip higher than the other?

Direct your child to bend forward at the waist with arms extended toward the floor.

5. Is there a hump in the rib region?

If the answer to any of these questions is yes, you should make sure that a doctor screens your child. If you have any further questions, you may call the school nurse at the numbers below.

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