

SCOLIOSIS

Frequently Asked Questions

Will my child be able to lead a normal life?

The School Health Screening Programme has helped to identify many cases of scoliosis early. It has allowed many children to be treated with either observation or bracing and avoided the need for surgery. Your child should be able to lead a normal life and enjoy healthy activities such as swimming and other sports. In fact, he or she should be physically active and leading a healthy lifestyle.

For more information, call:

HealthLine at 1800 223 1313

Monday – Friday: 8.30am to 5pm
Saturday: 8.30am to 1pm



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What further tests are done?



An X-ray of the spine can help doctors assess the degree of the spinal curve and the stage of growth of the child's skeleton.

What is the management for Scoliosis?

The management that will be recommended depends on the child's age, the stage of growth of the bones, the extent of the curve and how fast the curve is progressing.

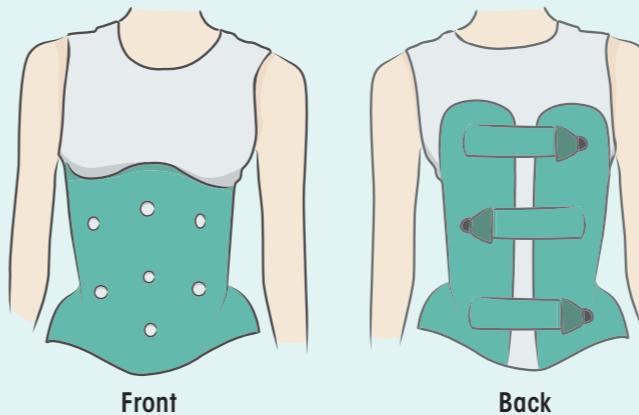
Scoliosis can be mild, moderate or severe. Scoliosis management includes one or a combination of the following:

■ MONITORING

Scoliosis is more likely to progress in a young child whose skeleton is still growing. Hence a child with a mild curve and whose skeleton is still growing will be seen and examined regularly by the doctor at SHC.

■ BRACING

If the curve is moderate, the doctor may order bracing of the spine. The aim of bracing is to prevent the curve from becoming worse. Bracing should be continued until the child's bones are fully grown.

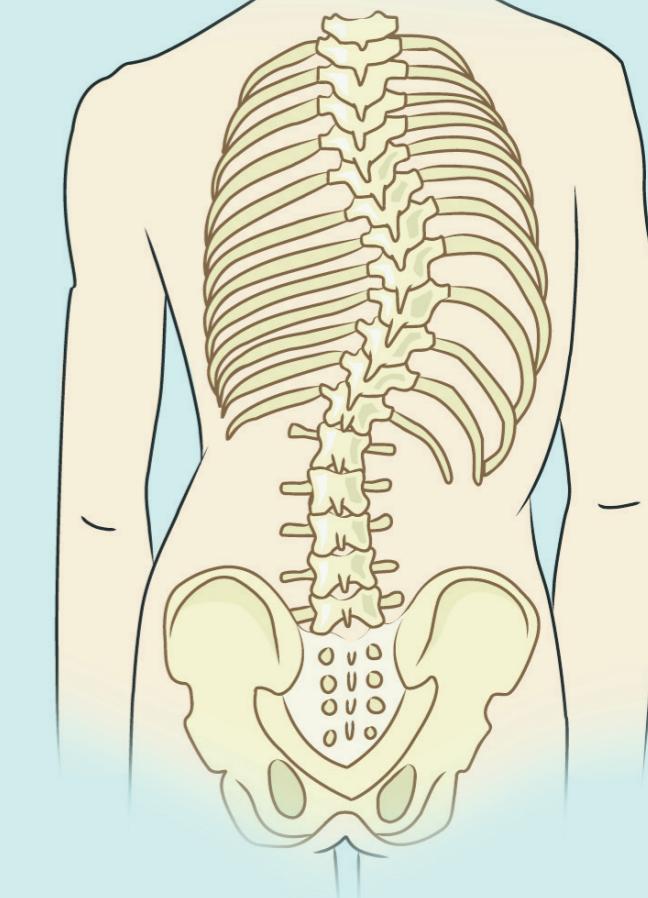


Front

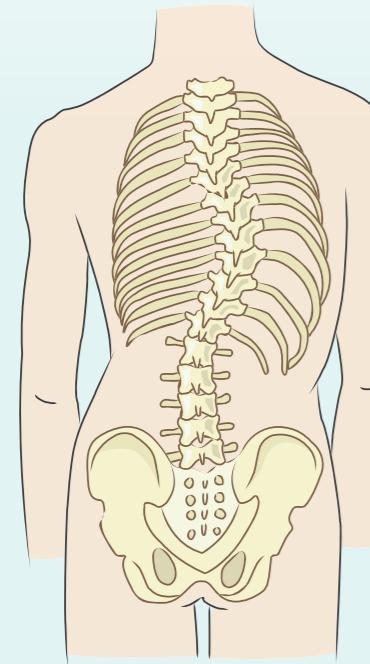
Back

■ SURGERY

If the curve is severe, the doctor may advise surgery to correct the scoliosis or stop it from worsening.



What is Scoliosis?



Scoliosis is a medical condition in which the spine is curved to one side. It can occur in a child, usually from 10 years old and may worsen during the period of rapid growth that occurs just before puberty. Once this growth spurt has stopped, the curve usually becomes stable.

Mild curves are quite common in boys and girls. But the curves in girls are more likely to become worse during the growth spurt. If not treated, scoliosis may lead to severe deformity.

What are the signs of Scoliosis?

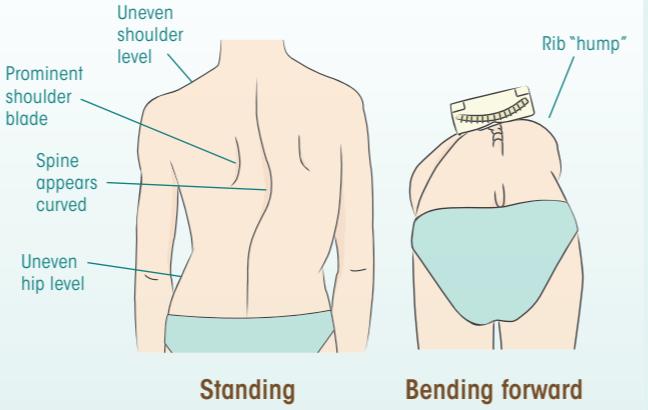
You may notice one or more of the following signs in a child.

When standing up:

- Body does not look symmetrical
- Spine appears curved, with the body leaning to one side
- One shoulder appears to be higher than the other
- One shoulder blade is more visible (sticks out more) than the other
- One hip is higher than the other
- There is more space between arms and body
- One side of the chest or breast may appear more prominent than the other (in girls)
- The clothes do not fit properly

When bending forward, a rib "hump" appears.

CURVED SPINE



Scoliosis does not usually cause back pain, although some patients may experience mild discomfort with physical activity.

Take your child to see a doctor if you think that he or she has one of the above signs.

What causes Scoliosis?

Most of the time, the cause of scoliosis is unknown. Scoliosis sometimes occurs in families. It may sometimes be due to illnesses acquired before birth, or problems with the nerves, muscles or bones.

Scoliosis is not caused by

- Deficiency in the diet or poor milk intake. A balanced diet is important for a growing child to be healthy and fit.
- Carrying heavy things, for example, heavy school bag on one shoulder.
- Any particular physical activity.
- Poor standing or sleeping position.

Is Scoliosis preventable?

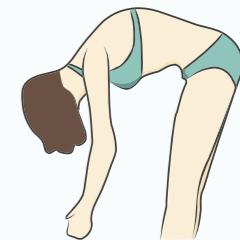
We do not know how to prevent scoliosis. But once it occurs, the curve may be treated to prevent it from getting worse. The doctor will manage the child according to how serious the curve is and will advise the parents accordingly.

How does School Health Service (SHS) of Youth Preventive Services Division (YPSD) help?

The mission of YPSD is to promote good health and reduce illness in the school-age population. SHS teams comprising doctors and nurses visit schools annually to provide health screening, including screening for scoliosis in certain primary and secondary levels.

SCREENING TESTS

The Forward Bending Test is used to screen for scoliosis. The child has to bend forward so that the doctor or nurse can examine the back.



A Scoliometer is also used to check for scoliosis.



If a "hump" is detected, the child will be referred to the Student Health Centre (SHC) for further evaluation. If necessary, further test such as an X-ray of the spine, may be done.