



NATIONWIDE CHILDREN'S
When your child needs a hospital, everything matters.

Helping Hand™

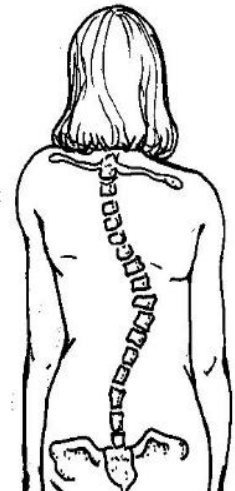
Health Education for Patients and Families

Sports Medicine: Scoliosis

Scoliosis is a condition where there is an abnormal curve of the spine. Most cases are idiopathic, meaning there is no known cause. However, some cases are related to neurological conditions or seen in children with birth defects.

Signs and symptoms

- shoulders, hips, waist or muscles look uneven (Picture 1)
- spine curves to the side
- backache or low back pain
- a bump or uneven appearance of the back when bending over
- there are no symptoms in many cases
- trouble breathing due to less area in the chest for lungs to expand (in severe cases)



Picture 1 The back of a child with scoliosis.

Increased risk

- cerebral palsy or muscular dystrophy
- females
- birth defects

Treatment

- Medicine can help with inflammation and pain.
 - Anti-inflammatory medicines, such as ibuprofen (Motrin® or Advil®) or naproxen (Aleve®) may be recommended. Take these as directed by your health care provider.
 - Other minor pain relievers, such as acetaminophen (Tylenol®).

- Cold and heat may be used.
 - Cold should be applied for 10 to 15 minutes every 2 to 3 hours for swelling and after any activity that makes symptoms worse. Use ice packs or an ice massage.
 - Heat may be used before performing stretching and strengthening activities prescribed by your health care provider or athletic trainer. Use a heat pack or warm soak. Apply for 10 to 15 minutes.
- Most cases of scoliosis only need to be observed with routine X-rays to monitor the curve until a child stops growing.
- Sometimes physical therapy done at home or under the supervision of a therapist can help decrease pain or stop progress of the curve.
- Sometimes the scoliosis curving will get worse. If the curve is between 25 to 40 degrees and the child has a lot of growth left, they may need a brace to prevent or slow the progress. The brace will be worn 22 to 23 hours each day.
- At times, even with bracing, the curve may continue to progress past 40 degrees. Surgery may be recommend to improve the curve and prevent further curving through adulthood.

How to prevent

No preventive measures are known, although proper warming up and stretching before practice or competition, as well as maintaining appropriate conditioning, flexibility and strength, may help.

When to call the health care provider

Call your health care provider or the **Sports Medicine team** at **(614) 355-6000** if:

- you develop numbness, weakness or loss of bowel or bladder functions
- new, unexplained symptoms develop

To schedule an appointment with Sports Medicine, visit NationwideChildrens.org/SportsMedicineScheduling or scan this code with your camera phone.

