

SCOLIOSIS FACTS

Scoliosis is a sideways curvature of the spine and can be a serious health problem. Typically, it occurs during the pre-pubescent growth spurt. Scoliosis has been noted in females especially if other family members have been affected. Occasionally it's associated with other medical conditions. Early detection is essential to help avoid complications that include back pain, fatigue, reduced exercise tolerance, and deformity. Severe cases of scoliosis, affect heart and lung function.

Treatment may involve bracing. Severe curves may require spinal surgery. Treatment is best determined by a trained medical professional. The school public health nurse may provide screening for individual students at the request of the parent or guardian.

Methods for early detection of scoliosis:

Direct your child to stand up straight, barefoot, with arms hanging freely at the sides. Boys should stand with shirts off; girls may wear halter tops.

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 your child is screened by a doctor. Contact your physician, your school nurse, or the Medical Society of Northern Virginia at <http://www.msnva.org/about/memberlist> for a physician referral.

