

# Screening for Scoliosis

## What Is Scoliosis?

- Scoliosis is a complex curving of the spine that affects the alignment of the bones.
- It occurs most frequently from age ten through the early teen years.
- Three out of a thousand children need treatment for scoliosis.

## What Causes Scoliosis?

- Some cases of scoliosis are due to an underlying bone, muscle or nerve problem, but most are called "idiopathic," meaning that the cause is unknown.
- Scoliosis is not the result of carrying a backpack, poor posture, or a small difference in leg lengths.
- Scoliosis may be hereditary in some families.

## How Is Scoliosis Treated?

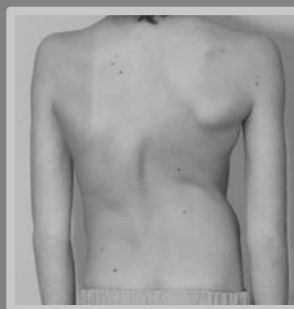
- Small curves in the growing child are treated with observation.
- Moderate curves in the growing child are usually treated with a brace. The brace is intended to prevent the curve from worsening during the growth years.
- Large or rapidly progressing curves, greater than 50 degrees, may be treated surgically.

## How To Do A Postural Screening

- The child should be screened privately with the examiner standing several feet behind the child to obtain the best possible view of the back. The child should stand with feet together, knees straight and arms hanging loosely at the side with back toward the examiner.

**Remember early diagnosis and a professional referral are key elements to a successful medical outcome.**

- 1** Observe the standing child giving careful attention to any differences in:



- Shoulder heights
- Shoulder blade protrusion
- The space between each arm and the body
- Hip heights

- 2** Observe the child bending forward so that the back is parallel to the floor and look for:



- Asymmetry of the rib cage or muscles on either side of the lumbar spine

- 3** Observe the child from the side and look for:



- Excessive roundness



- Lordosis or sway back