

SHIFTING FOCUS ON SCOLIOSIS

It is Possible to Have Mild Scoliosis and the Condition Go Undiagnosed & Unnoticed

Only About 30% of Scoliosis Cases Will Require Treatment with Braces and Only About 10% Will Require Surgery

Scoliosis can be debilitating and very painful, but it is important to detect scoliosis at a young age. Early detection can be the difference between corrective treatment and surgery. Unnatural curvature of the spine can be frightening and worrisome to anyone diagnosed but it is important to understand your diagnosis and options moving forward.

Please use this guide as a resource for knowledge and understanding of scoliosis causes, symptoms, diagnosis and treatment.

01 | Cause

There are two types of scoliosis; idiopathic scoliosis is diagnosed in children or adults and often has no known cause. Degenerative scoliosis is typically only diagnosed in adults and is brought on by the normal wear and tear on the back. There are some genetic implications with the disease but those with birth defects, neurological abnormalities, and certain conditions are also more susceptible.

02 | Symptoms

Some symptoms may seem like other conditions and can be confused with overuse or natural “growing pains”. However, if there is any suspicion of a more serious condition it is important to look for the following indications:

- Uneven Shoulders
- Uneven Waist
- Prominent Shoulder
- Protruding Rib Bones
- Difficulty Breathing

03 | Diagnosis

Diagnosis can be confirmed by a physician who will conduct a physical exam and visually look for abnormal spine movement or location. Examining the curvature of the spine while bent over and sitting up straight offers a preliminary diagnosis for scoliosis. All cases receive confirmation for scoliosis with the assistance from imaging tests such as:

- X-ray
- MRI Scan
- CT Scan
- Bone Scan

04 | Treatment

Many diagnosed with scoliosis will require no treatment. Others with severe spinal deformity or pain may need intervention. If a patient is experiencing pain or loss in quality of life, it is a priority to find relief. Bracing or surgery are typical treatment options with pain medication to help with discomfort. Several factors are considered before approaching a treatment plan:

- **Gender** – Females have a much higher risk of progression than males
- **Severity of Curve** – Larger curves are more likely to progress over time
- **Curve Pattern** – S-shaped curves tend to worsen more frequently than a C-curve
- **Location of Curve** – Curvature of the thoracic spine progress more frequently than the lumbar or cervical spine
- **Age** – If a child’s bones stopped growing the risk of curve progression is lower, however braces are less effective on matured bones

For more information on orthopedic conditions, please visit: <http://www.orthoinfo.aaos.org/>

Did You Know?

There are more than 3 million cases of scoliosis diagnosed in the U.S. every year

References

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/scoliosis/diagnosis-treatment/drc-20350721>

<https://www.healthline.com/symptom/scoliosis>