

Understanding Scoliosis



Special Report



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The word scoliosis comes from the Greek word scoliosis, meaning "crookedness of a body part." Originally, the term meant any abnormal deviation of the spine from the midline, but for many years the term has been restricted to mean an abnormal sideward curvature of the spine away from the midline when viewed from the back.

When relatively straight, the spine behaves much like a column. When viewed from the back, the shoulders and hips are level and there is no twisting of the spine. When deformed, the spine becomes subjected to bending stresses and behaves more like a bending beam or rod than a column. Unlike engineered columns of uniform size made of like material, the effects of body weight in an upright position are much more complex to understand or predict.

The structural faults associated with scoliosis are usually more obvious as physical distortions at the shoulder, chest, and hip levels. In addition, the ribs and shoulder blades are often distorted when there is a scoliosis condition, but this sign may also be the result of a paralysis or disease process.

Common Types of Scoliosis

Most scoliotic distortions can be classified into two major types: functional and structural. Each type has many sub-categories depending on the exact cause.

Functional Scoliosis – Functional scoliosis occurs when some muscles or ligaments have tightened and shortened while others have weakened and stretched. Some nerves may have become stretched and irritated while others have become compressed and inhibited. This tends to cause segments of the spine to twist, creating an abnormal spinal curvature. It is generally

caused by the effect of gravitational forces on muscles, tendons and ligaments that vary in their integrity.

Structural Scoliosis - There are two major types of structural curvatures: (1) irreversible spinal curves that exhibit gross changes in the spinal joints; and (2) spinal curves that are the result of possibly reversible tissue changes, such as shortened ligaments or spastic or weakened muscles. Corrective care can improve the functional element involved and inhibit further abnormal structural changes.

Chiropractic Care

The primary goals of chiropractic therapy are to relieve spinal stress, achieve spinal balance, and maintain healthy body function through chiropractic spinal adjustments. Other procedures sometimes employed include spinal traction, the use of braces and shoe supports, exercises to stretch shortened muscles and strengthen weak muscles, and nutrition programs.

Spinal problems like scoliosis affect functions of the body, even when pain is absent. Play it safe and visit WellnessOne™ on a regular basis.

Scoliosis screening should begin at home. Parents should remain aware of spinal position and posture in their children. The professionals at WellnessOne™ can assist in diagnosing and prescribing appropriate treatment of all forms of scoliosis.

With early detection and proper treatment, the effects of most spinal disorders can be corrected. Call WellnessOne™ at 425.644.8386 for an appointment.



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