

Scoliosis (Curved Backbone)

Scoliosis

Scoliosis is an abnormal side-to-side curve of the spine. When looking at the back, the spine should look like an “S” or “C” shape. There can also be an abnormal curve to the lower back (lordosis).

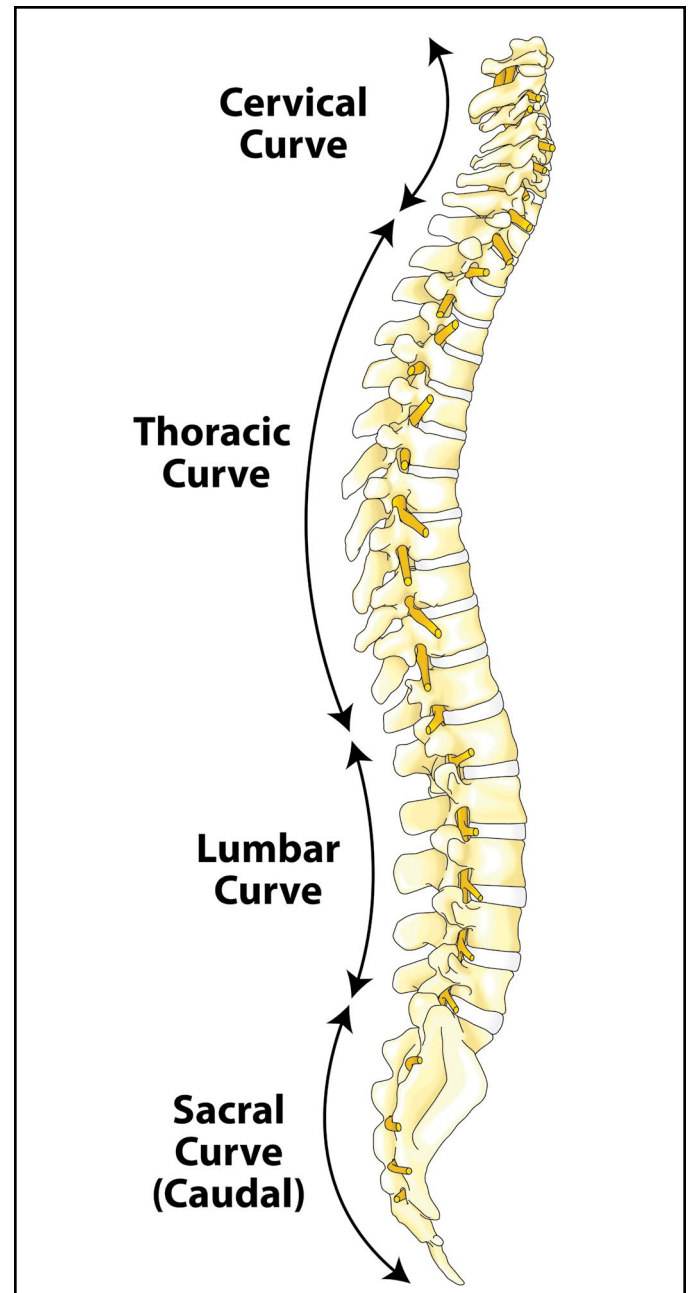
Scoliosis is usually easy to spot, either by the curve or by uneven shoulders. Your health care provider can do an exam to determine if you have scoliosis.

Treatment

Treatment for scoliosis depends on how severe your spine curves and your symptoms (pain, breathing problems, problems moving your body). The earlier scoliosis is diagnosed, the more treatment options are available.

Treatment begins with doing an exam, X-ray or both every few months to see if the curves increase. If they do, your health care provider may recommend that you:

- **wear a back brace** to prevent the curves from increasing. Braces are used for kids and teenagers who are still growing. A brace can prevent the curves from getting worse. It cannot straighten the spine to better alignment. When wearing a brace, kids and teenagers are able to do many of their regular activities.
- **have surgery** if a brace does not prevent the curves from increasing. Surgery straightens the spine as much as possible and holds it in place.



Curves of the spine

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(over)

Surgery for Scoliosis

Surgery for scoliosis is called spinal fusion. This surgery is done to stabilize the spine by fusing two or more vertebrae. This is done with a bone graft, a metal implant or a combination of the two. It can be done from the front (anterior), the back (posterior) or both.

Typically, kids can return to school in about 2 weeks after surgery. Adults can return to work or school in about 4 to 6 weeks. Your surgeon will give you instructions for when you can return to physical activities.

Tips for Returning to Work

- You may wish to return to work slowly, working half days at first and increasing as you are able.
- Do not carry notebooks, laptops and other items to and from the work place.
- Limit sitting to 45 to 60 minutes at a time. Stand up and walk or reposition often.
- Avoid activities that require bending, lifting and twisting.

Tips for Returning to School

- Have one set of books at home and one at school so you do not have to carry them back and forth. Many books can also be found online.
- Sit in the back or on the side of the classroom and sit for no more than 45 to 60 minutes at a time. Stand up and walk as needed to stay comfortable. Get up and take a short walk, pace the back of the classroom or just stand.
- Carry your backpack with the straps over both shoulders to spread the weight to your entire back. Do not use backpacks on wheels.
- Pack your backpack with the heaviest items closest to your body (books in the back, folders in the front).
- You may want to return to school for a few classes or half days at first. Increase to full days as you are able.
- You may want to get out of class 5 minutes early to prevent getting bumped by other people.
- Your only exercise will be walking.
- Talk with your surgeon about restrictions to follow during gym class.