

# SHEPPARD CHIROPRACTIC

## Scoliosis

Your reaction is one of panic followed by a good measure of guilt. After all, you should have noticed it first. You're the parent. But even the mildest scoliosis is hard to detect without an X-ray.

Let's look at this closer. Scoliosis is simply a curvature of the spine. From the back, it is seen as a "sideways" curvature, compared to a normal spine, which should be straight. Scoliosis can be damaging to a child's health in a number of ways. As the curvature progresses, it can put pressure on the lungs and heart in advanced cases, and lead to the development of arthritis. Posture becomes affected, clothing doesn't hang properly, and this could lead to problems with your child's self esteem.

There are two types of scoliosis, fixed and functional. The latter is by far the most common. This type of spinal curvature can straighten when a child assumes certain positions. It is most often labeled by physicians as "idiopathic," which simply means "no known cause." I don't agree!

Historically medicine has generally adopted a "wait and see" attitude towards scoliosis, much to the frustrations to parents and children alike. Those curvatures that progress rapidly are eventually scheduled for surgery where steel rods can be screwed into the spine with the hope of straightening the curvature.

So, what causes scoliosis? Dr. Fred Barge, past President of the International Chiropractors Association, attributes this

phenomenon to a vertebral subluxation, a misaligned vertebrae affecting the way the nervous system transmits and processes information. I very much agree. Subluxations can be caused by the trauma of birth itself, along with slips, falls, stress and toxins. The average child falls 2,500 times before the age of seven.

"I feel my son, Ethan, has fallen more than that already," says Dr. Joe. Statistics state that your child will have at least three major falls: out of crib, down the steps, off changing table, etc. before the age of three.

As a result, the nervous system can respond in a faulty manner by causing abnormal muscle activity, which can produce a spinal curvature. So you see, scoliosis is rarely the problem; it is most often the result of a long-standing vertebral subluxation. The nervous system is trying to adapt, too. After time, a pattern is learned and it becomes a chronic habit of misalignment.

In the case of children, a chiropractor is mainly concerned with the constant, faulty data that disturbs normal nervous system function. It becomes of paramount importance to prevent and eliminate this faulty programming before the improper and inefficient habit is learned. I see vertebral subluxations as a major threat to a child's health and well being. After all, as the twig is bent, so grows the tree.



***For additional information, please contact Sheppard Chiropractic at 753-5437.***