

Scoliosis

Scoliosis, the medical term for lateral curvature of the spine, is a common disorder. Between 5 and 10 percent of school children have spinal curves. It is slightly more common in girls than boys and has its onset usually about ages 10-12. About 85 percent of curves are idiopathic (of unknown origin), although there appears to be a strong familial tendency in the idiopathic group.

In addition to scoliosis, kyphosis or "humpback," and lordosis, sometimes referred to as "swayback," can be seen in the same age groups to be screened. Kyphosis and lordosis are much less common than scoliosis.

Although most curvatures are of minor consequences, progressive spinal deformity may lead to crippling spine deformity and heart and lung problems; therefore, early detection and treatment are essential.

Spinal deformities in the early years often go undetected because of the painless onset. Unless the condition is severe, it will not be visible to parents or others in the fully clothed child. Parents cannot be expected to detect the curve at an early state. Early detection, however, can be accomplished by mass screening of the critical age groups by trained personnel. Therefore, all school children in Grades 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9 (ages 11-14), including special education students, should be screened once a year for this potential problem.

Senate Joint Resolution 62

The Senate Joint Resolution 62 adopted pursuant to Code of Alabama 1975, Section 16-29-01, wherein is contained the mandate that the Alabama Department of Education and the State Board of Health shall provide for and require screening for spinal deformities of public school students in the state of Alabama. It is the purpose of such screening to identify those students who may have a lateral curvature of the spine.

Screening Procedures

The screening procedures shall be consistent with the accepted standards for spinal screening procedures as outline in the "Alabama Public School Spinal Screening Program Procedure Manual."

- Boys will be required to remove shirts and wear gym shorts so that the waistline and hips can be observed.
- Girls will be observed in a two-piece bathing suit or a halter top or bra and shorts. Body suits, one-piece bathing suits, or T-shirts are not acceptable.

Screening Results

A record of the screening results must be made of each student suspected of having a single deformity and copies of the results must be sent to the parents or legal guardians of the students. The notification shall include screening results, the significance of treating at an early stage, the services generally available for treatment after diagnosis, and a method for the school to receive follow-up information from health care providers.

Source: Alabama Public School Spinal Screening Program Procedure Manual