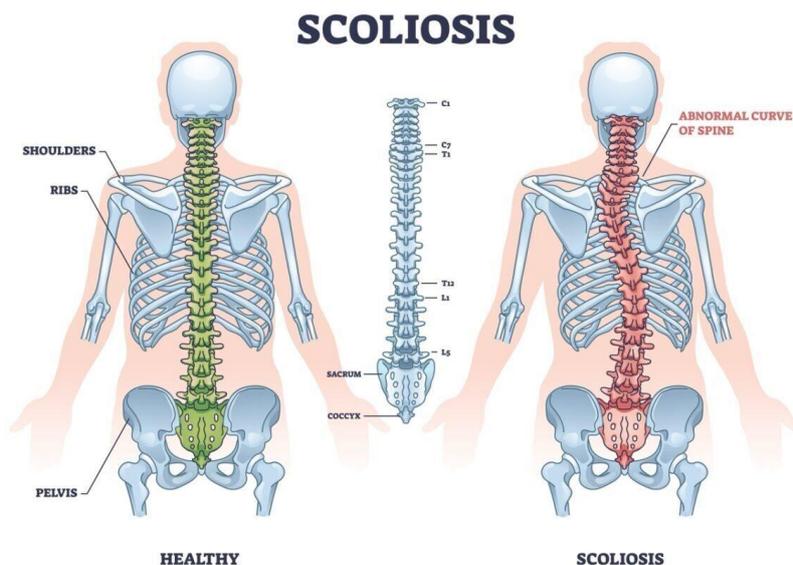


Scoliosis



What is scoliosis?

Scoliosis is a condition where the spine curves sideways and may also rotate. This can give the spine an “S” or “C” shape when viewed from the back. Scoliosis can affect children, teenagers, and adults.

Types of scoliosis

- **Idiopathic scoliosis** – the most common type; cause is unknown (often starts in adolescence)
- **Congenital scoliosis** – present at birth due to spinal development differences
- **Neuromuscular scoliosis** – associated with conditions affecting muscles or nerves
- **Adult (degenerative) scoliosis** – develops later in life due to wear and tear of the spine

Common signs and symptoms

Many people have few or no symptoms. When present, symptoms may include:

- Uneven shoulders or hips
- One shoulder blade sticking out more than the other
- Visible curve in the spine
- Back pain or stiffness (more common in adults)
- Muscle fatigue
- In severe cases, breathing difficulties (rare)

How is scoliosis diagnosed?

Diagnosis is based on:

- Medical history and physical examination
- Observation of posture and movement
- X-rays to measure the degree of spinal curvature (Cobb angle)

How is scoliosis treated?

Treatment depends on age, symptoms, and the size of the curve.

Observation

- Mild curves may only need regular monitoring
- No treatment is required if the curve is not progressing

Physiotherapy and exercise

- Exercises to improve posture, strength, and flexibility
- Education on posture and activity modification
- Helps manage pain and improve function (especially in adults)

Bracing (mainly in children and adolescents)

- Used to prevent the curve from worsening during growth
- Does not usually correct the curve permanently

Pain management

- Paracetamol or anti-inflammatory medication if suitable
- Heat or gentle movement for stiffness

Surgery

- Considered only for severe or progressive curves
- Aimed at correcting and stabilising the spine

Living with scoliosis

- Stay active and exercise regularly
- Maintain good posture
- Most sports and activities are safe
- Scoliosis does not usually stop people from leading active lives



When should I seek medical advice?

Contact your GP or healthcare professional if:

- You notice increasing spinal curvature
- Back pain is worsening or persistent
- There are changes in posture or balance

- You develop numbness, weakness, or breathing difficulties

Outlook

Many people with scoliosis live normal, active lives. Early detection and appropriate management help prevent progression and reduce symptoms.
