

HEALTHY SPINE

A healthy spine is straight.

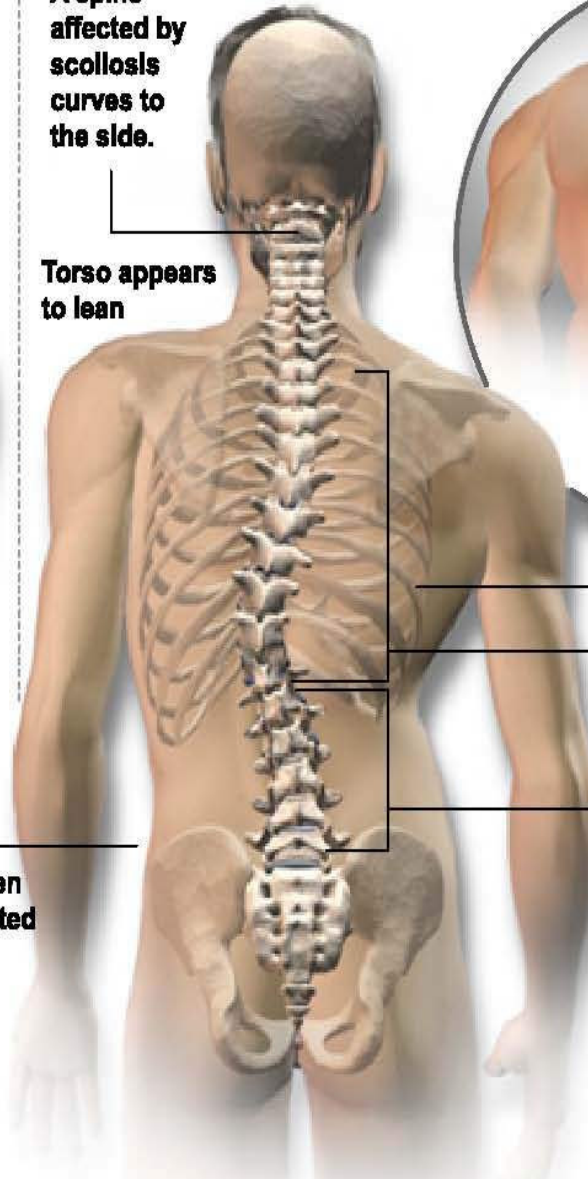


SYMPTOMS OF SCOLIOSIS

A spine affected by scoliosis curves to the side.

Torso appears to lean

Waist may appear uneven or hips elevated



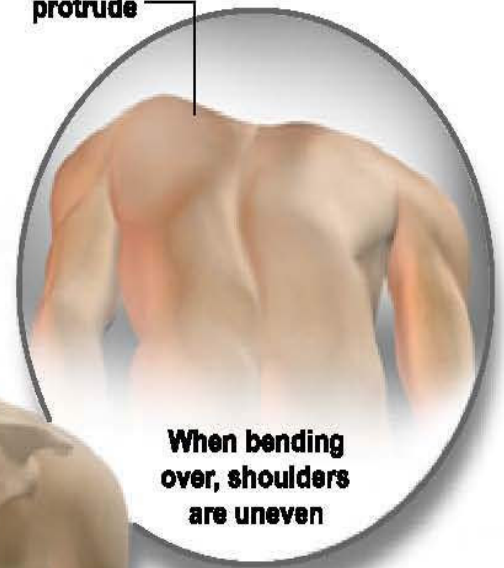
One or both shoulder blades protrude

When bending over, shoulders are uneven

Misshapen rib cage

A curvature may be seen in the mid back (thorax) ...

... or it may be seen in the lower back (lumbar).



About Scoliosis

About two percent of people are affected by a deformation of the spine called scoliosis.

CAUSES

While scoliosis can run in families, in most cases the cause is unknown. It often develops before

puberty and goes unnoticed because there may be no pain. In adults, scoliosis may develop due to worsening of a slight curvature from childhood, or it can be caused by degenerative diseases of the spine such as kyphosis or osteoporosis.

SYMPTOMS

Scoliosis can limit a person's ability to move normally. It can also bring on pain and reduce ability to breathe if a misshapen rib cage restricts normal lung growth.

WARNING SIGNS

Any of the signs shown above should be checked by a physician, who can make an accurate diagnosis.

TREATMENT

Most people with scoliosis don't need treatment. Early detection is important, since medical

observation during the growing years is needed to make sure the curve doesn't get worse. If intervention is needed, an orthopedic brace may prevent further curvature. In some cases, spinal fusion surgery may be needed to straighten and stabilize the spine.