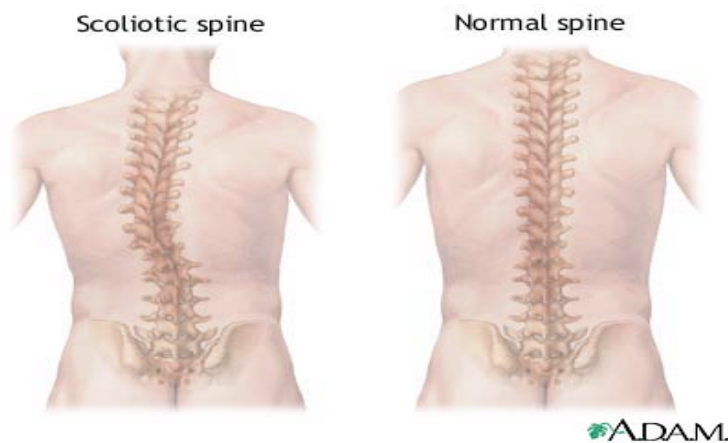# Scoliosis

Scoliotic spine   Normal spine

What is Scoliosis and what are the causes?
Scoliosis is a curvature of the spine and on x-ray may look like an "S" shape. Scoliosis can be classified as
- Congenital caused by vertebral abnormalities at birth
- Idiopathic- there is an unknown cause
- Neuromuscular- the vertebral abnormalities developed due to another condition such as muscle atrophy in the spine, spina bifida, cerebal palsy or birth defects.
- Degenerative: caused by arthritic changes to the spine as we age.
- Functional: functional scoliosis can be caused by an abnormality elsewhere in the body such as a leg length discrepancy.

What are the symptoms of scoliosis?
With scoliosis one might see a shoulder significantly higher than the other, an uneven hip height, the rib cage appearing more prominent on one side, and the head may appear to be off center in relation to the pelvis. Scoliosis is not typically associated with back pain but certain types of scoliosis can cause pain.

How is it treated?
Treatment should first start by consulting ones physician. The form of treatment is dependent upon the severity of the curvature. In severe cases such as neuromuscular scoliosis, surgery is necessary due to the high possibility of the curvature worsening.
Scoliosis is very common during adolescence. Typically the curvature is monitored by taking x-rays. If the curvature is less than 25 degrees then no action is taken, 25-40º a brace might be recommended to stop the progression, and greater than 40º typically requires surgery.
If there is back pain associated with scoliosis, often times physical therapy is prescribed to help improve core strength and decrease pain. Although this treatment does not change the condition of the spine it does to help to decrease symptoms.

If you would like more information about this issue, or need a physician referral in your area, please call us at 310-860-9720.