

PITTYSLVANIA COUNTY SCHOOLS

School Health Services
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Scoliosis: Information and Screening Steps

Scoliosis is a musculoskeletal disorder in which there is a sideways curvature of the spine. Two curves are usually identified, in opposite directions of each other, creating an “S” or “C” shape to the spine. Idiopathic scoliosis is the most common type and generally occurs after the age of 10. Girls are more likely than boys to have scoliosis.

The school district is sending this information home with all students in grades 5 through 10, so that you may screen for this disorder at home.

The cause of scoliosis is unknown in most cases and the largest percentages of cases do not require treatment. Treatment can vary from observation or bracing to surgery. Progressive scoliosis in the growing child can lead to not only an asymmetrical body, it can lead to back pain, headaches, shortness of breath, leg, hip and knee pain, menstrual-cycle disturbances and chronic fatigue. It is also associated with a higher incidence of osteoporosis later in life. In the event you find that your child has an abnormal curving of the spine or you suspect scoliosis, contact your physician or health care provider. They will most likely do x-rays to determine the degree of curvature. The severity of the curvature will indicate what treatment is needed. Early treatment is important so that normal growth and development aren't hindered and the above symptoms don't restrict activity and mobility.

Simple steps to screen your child for scoliosis:

- ❖ Have your child stand in front of you with their arms at their sides. Have them stand erect with good posture and looking forward. Stand about 10 feet back and observe them for symmetry. Is one shoulder higher than the other? Does one hip look higher than the other? Does the head tilt or lean to one side more than the other?
- ❖ Now have the child turn around so their back is to you. Have them bend forward like they are going to touch their toes. Have them stay in this position while you look across their back. Does one side of the back seem higher than the other side? Does one shoulder blade protrude more than the other? Does one hip seem higher than the other? Is the spine curved sideways?

If you answer yes to any of these questions, it is recommended that you contact your physician or health care provider for further evaluation.