

# Welcome to the Orthopedic Spine Program



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## What is the Orthopedic Spine Program?

The Orthopedic Spine Program at BC Children's Hospital has 2 orthopedic surgeons who see approximately 50 patients each week. The orthopedic surgeons in the clinic provide care for idiopathic scoliosis, neuromuscular scoliosis, and congenital and other spine conditions.

The orthopedic surgeons work with other doctors, nurses, and researchers. Together, the team aims to improve the function and quality of life of all our patients.

## Scoliosis

### What is Scoliosis?

Scoliosis is when a person's spine curves from side-to-side. When this occurs, the spine looks more like an "S" or "C" rather than a straight line. This curve can lead to changes in one's shoulders, ribcage, pelvis, waist, and the overall shape of one's back.

The three most common types of scoliosis are:

#### 1. Idiopathic Scoliosis

"Idiopathic" means of unknown cause. Idiopathic scoliosis is when the spine is curved sideways but there is no known cause of this curvature. It is believed that genetics may play a role in the development of idiopathic scoliosis. This is the most common type of scoliosis.

#### 2. Congenital Scoliosis

"Congenital" means present at birth. Congenital scoliosis occurs when the bones in the spine (vertebrae) are not shaped properly (abnormality) from birth. This is the 2nd most common type of scoliosis.

#### 3. Neuromuscular Scoliosis

Neuromuscular scoliosis is caused by a neuromuscular disease or condition (e.g. cerebral palsy, spinal muscular atrophy, and spina bifida). Neuromuscular scoliosis is also known as secondary scoliosis. This is the 3rd most common type of scoliosis.

Scoliosis affects many individuals in Canada. It is more common in girls than boys.

### How is Scoliosis Diagnosed?

Scoliosis is diagnosed by a physical exam followed by an X-ray. The X-ray views the vertebrae to see if they are in a straight line or curve to form the shape of an "S"

or a "C". The X-ray may also tell the size of the curve. The size of the curve is measured in degrees:

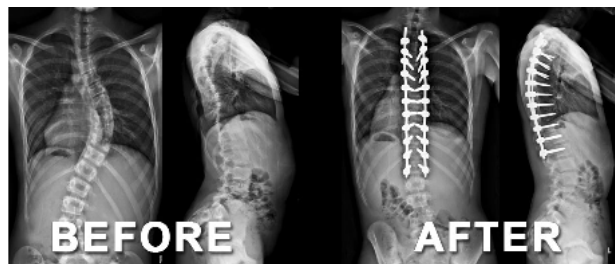
- **Small curve:** less than 20 degrees
- **Moderate curve:** between 20 and 50 degrees
- **Large curve:** greater than 50 degrees

### How is Scoliosis Treated?

There are several different ways to treat scoliosis. The type of treatment selected depends on the type and size of the curve.

Your orthopedic surgeon (bone and joint doctor) will discuss with you the possible treatment options for your scoliosis. These may include:

1. **Observation:** if you have a small curve in your spine, you will be observed over time to see if there are any changes in the curvature.
2. **Bracing:** for a medium-sized curve, you may be observed over time or treated with a brace. The brace will not cure or reverse the scoliosis, but can slow the progression.
3. **Surgery:** if your curve is larger, you may require surgery. Surgery is done to improve or correct the curvature in the spine and prevent it from getting bigger.



For more helpful resources, please flip over! →

To learn more about surgery, read the Scoliosis Surgery pamphlet and the Caring for Yourself after Surgery to Correct Scoliosis pamphlet. You can find it in the library catalogue:

<https://libraries.phsa.ca/fsrc>

Regardless of the treatment that you and your doctor decide, it is important to maintain a healthy lifestyle!

- **Be physically active:** yoga, pilates, and swimming are good activities to help develop core muscle strength.
- **Eat healthy:** a good diet will help your overall body health.
- **Avoid** unhealthy lifestyle behaviours (e.g. smoking)
- **Attend** regular follow-up visits with your doctor

## Our Research

Our team is heavily involved in spine research. We are working with an international group of Pediatric Spine Specialists to learn more about the causes and treatments of scoliosis to help provide the highest level of care to our patients! Please ask our team how you can get involved in our research!

## Where Can I Get More Information?

For more information on scoliosis, visit the BC Children's Hospital website for more information:

<http://www.bcchildrens.ca/spineprogram>

- Setting Scoliosis Straight Foundation: [www.settingscoliosisstraight.org](http://www.settingscoliosisstraight.org)
- Health Link BC: <http://www.healthlinkbc.ca/kb/content/major/hw72376.html#hw72378>
- Scoliosis Research Society: [http://www.srs.org/patient\\_and\\_family/scoliosis/index.htm](http://www.srs.org/patient_and_family/scoliosis/index.htm)
- Pediatric Orthopaedic Society of North America: <http://orthoinfo.aaos.org/topic.cfm?topic=A00353>
- Growing Spine Foundation <http://www.growingspine.org/support>

**To book your follow-up appointment please call:**

Dr. Chris Reilly, MD FRCSC  
BC Children's Hospital 604-875-3711

Dr. Firoz Miyajji, MD FRCSC  
BC Children's Hospital 604-875-2651

Dr. A. Ghag, MD FRCSC  
BC Children's Hospital 604-875-2068

**For general questions:**

Orthopedic Nurse Clinician 604-875-2609

## Try the orthopedics word search!



## Can you find these words?

ADOLESCENT, BRACE, CEREBRAL PALSY, CLINIC, CURVE, DOCTOR, FELLOW, LIFE, MIYANJI, NURSE, ORTHOPEDICS, PEDIATRIC, PHYSIOTHERAPY, REILLY, RESEARCH, RESIDENT, SCOLIOSIS, SPINE, STUDY, SURGERY, XRAY

*Developed by the health professionals of the Department of Orthopaedic Surgery with assistance from the Learning & Development Department.*