

# **Orthopaedic Connection**

## **Scoliosis Treatment**

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### ***Transforming patient information into patient understanding.***

Last time our Scoliosis article had to stop after bracing. Before getting into surgical treatment I have to cover what happens if scoliosis is left untreated.

#### **Natural History**

All of us have seen unfortunate persons with severe back deformities that make you turn away. In most cases these really bad curves were not treated and continued to progress.

The appearance is bad enough for the patient. In addition decreased lung capacity can lead to terrible heart problems and restrictive lung disease and early death.

The degree of back pain these patients have is more than the general population, but not as much as you might think.

#### **Surgery**

If the curve is more than 45 degrees and the child is still growing, surgery is usually recommended.

If the person is not growing any more surgery may still be advised for curves that exceed 55 degrees.

Surgery consists of a fusion of the spine. This consists of 2 parts. First the spine is straightened and stabilized by metallic implants made up of rods, hooks, screws and/or wires.

Then the spine is fused with bone graft from the Tissue Bank or from the patients own bone taken usually from the back of the pelvis.

Before surgery, blood may be donated by the patient for use during surgery if needed.

After surgery patients are usually walking by the second day without the need of a brace. It can take several months for the fusion to heal solidly.

#### **Long Term**

Once patients have recovered from surgery they don't experience much pain. Return to activities is possible in 6 - 9 months. Permanent limitation of spine motion after surgery prevents engaging in contact sports.

The metal implants stay in permanently. This makes going through metal detectors an adventure!

A spine fusion does not interfere with girls' future pregnancies or deliveries.

### **Prevention**

Sorry, good posture makes for a healthier back, but it won't prevent scoliosis.

There is nothing you or your child can do to prevent it.

But you can minimize the severity by early detection. Keep an eye out for symptoms especially if there is a family history of scoliosis. It isn't proven yet, but genetic factors will, I believe, in the future be discovered as the cause of scoliosis.

### **Back By Popular Demand**

#### **Factoid**

Field Turf is an artificial surface designed to be like natural grass. Field Turf is in place at Michigan Stadium in Ann Arbor and Ford Field in Detroit. A three year study of 564 collegiate games at 24 universities was done and half of the games were on Field Turf, the other half on natural grass. The study found a significantly lower incidence of both minor and severe injuries on Field Turf versus natural grass.

Next week I am going to wow you with Kyphosis! So long till then.

[www.orthopodsurgeon.com](http://www.orthopodsurgeon.com) is open 24 hours in case you need it! I specialize in you.

Good health. Good life. All the best to you.

Be well.

Dr. Haverbush