Scoliosis
Curvature of the Spine

Scoliosis is an abnormal curving of the spine from side to side often described as an “S” curve. It affects 2% of Americans, mostly adolescents.

Cause
- The cause is unknown in most cases.
- Girls are affected more often than boys.
- Untreated, severe scoliosis can lead to lung and heart damage, back problems, and distressing cosmetic changes.

Normal Spine
Has a slight outward curve in the upper back and an inward curve at the waist.

If scoliosis is detected early, then treatment can be started before it becomes a physical or emotional disability.

Signs
- One shoulder higher than the other
- Scapula (shoulder blade) on one side of the body is higher or more prominent
- One-sided fullness at the waist
- One hip higher than the other
- Unequal rib prominence

Abnormal View from Back
The spine curves abnormally to the side

Abnormal View Bending Forward
Shoulders and/or hips appear uneven

Symptoms
- Backache or low back pain
- Fatigue
- Maybe none

How to Check Your Child’s Spine
- Stand behind the child.
- Ask child to stand with feet together and bend forward to touch the toes.
- Check that the shoulders and the top of the hips are at the same height, the head is centered, and the rib cage is symmetrical. Note that the waist is even and that the body does not lean to one side.
- It may be helpful to run your hands along the spine to detect any abnormalities.
- Ask the child to stand up, turn around to face you, and to bend down again.
- Repeat the assessment.
- If any lateral curvature is noted, your child needs further evaluation.
What should be done if any of the signs and symptoms are present?

Contact your primary care physician for an appointment to have your child’s back evaluated.