

WHAT IS SPINAL SCREENING?

Spinal screening is a brief test to detect any abnormal curvature of the spine. Screening answers only one question: does the person show possible problems that indicate the need for further assessment? Spinal screening is a quick and cost-effective way to identify those who may need a more detailed evaluation by a primary care provider.

SCREENING SCHEDULE AND REQUIREMENTS SCREENING SCHEDULE

All children, who are attending public or private school must be screened for abnormal spinal curvature in accordance with the following schedule:

- Girls will be screened two times, once at age 10 (or fall semester of grade 5) and again at age 12 (or fall semester of grade 7).
- Boys will be screened one time at age 13 or 14 (or fall semester of grade 8).

It is incumbent on schools to identify outliers (i.e., children promoted to higher grades or held back) and ensure their screenings align with appropriate ages rather than grades.

- If a student is enrolled within 60 days of the date the school is closing for summer AND the student will still be the appropriate age or entering the appropriate grade level during the first 120 days of the following school year, then the screening may be postponed until that time.

EXCEPTIONS AND EXEMPTIONS

A student may be exempt from screening if:

- The student is already actively under medical care by an appropriately licensed professional for one or more of the spinal problems for which spinal screening is performed. To claim this exception, the student must submit signed and dated documentation from the licensed professional to the school. The documentation must state that the student is under active, ongoing medical care for specific spinal problems.
- A student's parent or legal guardian executes an affidavit stating that spinal screening will be conducted by an individual other than the screener used by the school. The school may admit the student on a provisional basis for up to 60 days. The school may deny admission until the screening record of the student is provided.
- The screening conflicts with the tenets and practices of a recognized church or religious denomination of which the individual is a member. The parent or legal guardian must submit to

the school an affidavit in lieu of the screening record stating the conflict. The affidavit must be submitted on or before the date spinal screening is scheduled.

ABNORMAL SPINAL CURVATURE

Spinal screening is designed to detect two major types of spinal deformities:

1. Scoliosis
2. Kyphosis

SCOLIOSIS

The rotation of scoliosis in the spinal column creates a side-to-side, "C"-shaped single curve or "S"-shaped double curve, when viewed from behind. Some cases worsen with time and can result in serious problems such as abnormal appearance in posture, increasing back pain as one ages, and in the worst cases, interference with heart and lung function.

KYPHOSIS

Kyphosis, or roundback, is described as an excessive curvature of the thoracic spine when viewed from the side.

A small percentage of young people have a fixed, structural type of curve called Scheuermann's kyphosis, involving vertebrae that are actually wedged. The cause for this type of deformity is unknown. Bracing or surgery may be recommended for the still-developing adolescent with Scheuermann's kyphosis. This type of kyphosis is less common in adolescents, but occasionally will be identified during school spinal screening.