

## ***What to Watch for – Scoliosis***

Scoliosis is an abnormal lateral curvature of the spine which usually develops from ages 10 to 14. It is important to identify and treat it, as in more severe cases it can compress the heart, lungs or spinal cord.

The best way to find out if you have scoliosis is to have your back examined by someone in your family or a school nurse. Here is a simple home test for early detection of scoliosis:

- Is one shoulder higher than the other?
- Is one shoulder blade (scapula) more prominent than the other?
- Does one hip seem higher or more prominent than the other?
- Is there a greater distance between the arm and the body on one side than on the other when the arms are hanging down loosely at the sides?
- Does the child have excessive “swayback” (lordosis)?
- Does the child have excessive “round shoulders” or “roundback” (kyphosis)?
- Is there a larger crease at one side of the waist than the other side?
- When you examine the child, have her bend forward with her arms hanging down loosely with the hands even and the palms touching each other at about the level of the knees. When in this position:
  - Is there a prominence or hump in the rib area?
  - Is there asymmetry (different heights) at the hips or waist?

If you have any “yes” answers, or if the child has a brother, sister, parent or other close relative with scoliosis, consult your family doctor or orthopedist.