



POSTURAL SCREENING PROGRAM

This screening is similar to other school health checks such as vision and hearing testing. It is done either by the physical education teacher or the school nurse and is free.

Why do the screening?

9 out of 10 young people have completely normal spines.

And in most others, a curve in the spine is usually mild and does not get worse- though it should be watched.

Those curves that do get worse may result in medical problems, pain, and obvious physical deformity if not treated.

The best prevention is a postural screening once a year between the ages of 10-14. A curve is most likely to appear during this time of rapid growth. Finding it

early is important for the best treatment.

"CURVATURE-OF-THE SPINE" What is it?



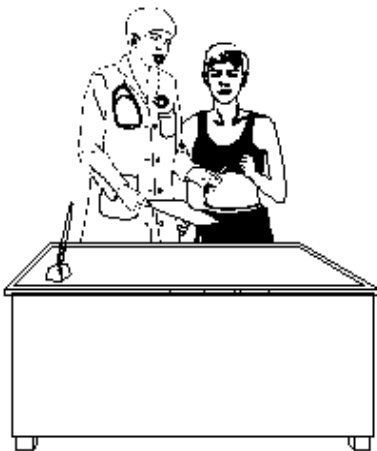
- ☞ A curve in the spine from front to back is called **KYPHOSIS** or **ROUNDBACK**.
- ☞ A side-to-side curve, called **SCOLIOSIS**, is the type which most often needs treatment.

What causes it?

- ☞ In most cases the cause is unknown. It cannot be prevented.
- ☞ Sometimes it runs in families.
- ☞ Girls need treatment more often than boys.
- ☞ It is not contagious.

Can you feel it?

- ☞ No, not in the early stages.
- ☞ It is even difficult to see in the early stages unless you know exactly what to look for.



How is it treated?

☞ **Most people with a mild curve will only need medical observation.**

☞ If the curve grows worse, a back brace is worn until bone growth stops. This does not limit most activities. Special exercise may also be included.

☞ In extreme cases, spinal surgery is performed.

What if it is not treated?

It is possible that medical problems will occur later in life which can include:

☞ obvious physical deformity



☞ pain and arthritic symptoms



☞ heart and lung disorders.

How is the screening done?

☞ A simple 30 second observation of the back: first standing, then bending forward.

☞ Screeners look for any unevenness of shoulders, hips, or one side of the back.

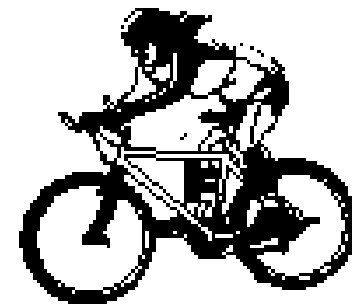
☞ Shirts are removed for better viewing. Boys and girls are screened separately. Girls should wear a two-piece bathing suit or a halter top and shorts.

Where is the screening done?

☞ Usually in the privacy of the school nurse's office or small physical education room. The Postural Screening Program is conducted in Massachusetts schools in grades 5-9. It serves to assist in the early detection of spinal problems. The school does not provide treatment, but can direct those who should have further attention to appropriate medical help.

POSTURAL SCREENING PROGRAM

One out of every ten young people



ages 10-14 will develop some "curvature-of-the-spine"... **But most will not need treatment. Getting checked early can help avoid a serious problem.**

A School Health Service of the Massachusetts Department of Public Health