

Five-step scoliosis screening process for volunteers

Early detection of scoliosis is important. The earlier the condition is diagnosed, the more options are available to treat it. Below are helpful steps on how to screen for scoliosis.

1

First position:

Front, standing position

Instructions to the child:

- Face the screener. Put your feet together with equal weight on both legs.
- Breathe in. Let it out, and relax your shoulders. Let your arms hang naturally at your sides.

Look for (see Fig. 1):

- Uneven shoulders (Is one shoulder higher than the other?)
- An arm that hangs farther out from body on one side
- A hip that appears higher on one side



Normal Fig. 1 Abnormal

2

Second position:

Front, bending forward (Adams forward bend test)

Instructions to the child (see Fig. 2a):

- Put your palms together with arms out straight.
- Put your chin on your chest and roll down until your hands touch your feet.

Encourage the child to continue to roll down as far as possible until her back is parallel to the floor. Have the child repeat the Adams forward bend test if she rolls down too quickly or if she rolls down to one side or the other. The child's hands should be pointing at her big toes.

Look for (see Fig. 2b):

- Upper rib prominence on one side
- Lower rib prominence on one side
- Lower back prominence on one side



Fig. 2a



Normal Fig. 2b Abnormal

3

Third position:

Back, standing position

Instructions to the child:

- Turn around (child's back is now to screener). Put your feet together with equal weight on both legs.
- Breathe in. Let it out and relax your shoulders. Let your arms hang naturally at your sides.

Look for (see Fig. 3):

- Uneven shoulders (Is one shoulder higher than the other?)
- A shoulder blade that is more prominent or higher than the other
- An arm that hangs farther out from the body on one side
- Waist fold deeper on one side



Normal Fig. 3 Abnormal

4

Fourth position:

Back, bending away (Adams forward bend test)

Instructions to the child:

- Put your palms together with arms out straight.
- Put your chin on your chest and roll down until your hands touch your feet.

Encourage the child to continue to roll down as far as possible until her back is parallel to the floor. Have the child repeat the Adams forward bend test if she rolls down too quickly or if she rolls down to one side or the other. The child's hands should be pointing at her big toes.

Look for (see Fig. 4):

- Upper rib prominence on one side
- Lower rib prominence on one side
- Lower back prominence on one side



Normal Fig. 4 Abnormal

5

Fifth position:

Side, in a bending position (Adams forward bend test)

Instructions to the child:

- Turn to the side. Put your feet together with equal weight on both legs.
- Put your palms together with arms out straight.
- Put your chin on your chest and roll down until your hands touch your feet.

Look for (see Fig. 5):

- Normal c-shaped curve or more than normal roundness

Encourage the child to continue to roll down as far as possible until her back is parallel to the floor. Have the child repeat the Adams forward bend test if she rolls down too quickly or if she rolls down to one side or the other. The child's hands should be pointing at her big toes.



Normal Fig. 5 Abnormal

Visit choa.org/scoliosis or call 404-255-1933 for more information.