

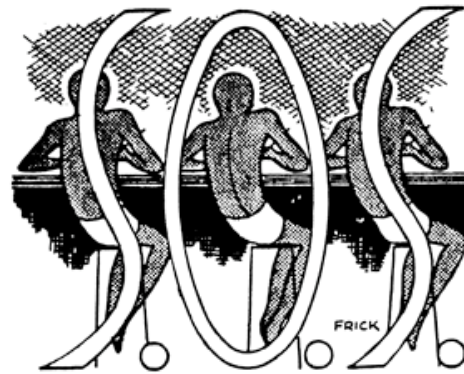


It is not by chance that some schools ask us to perform chiropractic screenings to carefully search for bio-mechanical alterations in the vertebral column of children and adolescents, in order to detect early factors like poor posture and pathologies that would encourage the development of spinal problems.

As the work of Dr F. Illi D.C. from Geneva demonstrated a few years ago, hereditary factors influence the development of the vertebral column, just as any other part of the body.

In addition, from age ten :

- there is accelerated growth of the bones,
- soft tissues like muscles and ligaments are submitted to more tensions because of the rapid development of the bones and changes in metabolism,
- abnormal fatigue follows, which may impair the activities of the adolescent.



We must remember that the adolescent needs an anatomically normal frame in order to develop balanced coordinated movements. For instance a round-shouldered back will impair deep breathing, a problem in the lower back will interfere with a normal gait, a cervical misalignment may produce headaches and pain in the arms, etc.

We have noticed that the two spinal deformities most commonly seen in adolescents, are :

- **Juvenile kyphosis** (or Scheuermann's disease), caused most of the time by too intense exercise or too heavy manual labor. In this condition, the vertebrae themselves are damaged and move closer together, potentially pinching the nerves running between them.
- **Scoliosis**, an "S" shaped deformity of the spine, which might originate from:
  - a dysfunction: - physical overloading such as carrying heavy satchels
  - practicing sports that require the use of only or mostly one side of the body, like tennis, fencing, etc.
  - a pathology: - such as a short leg due to a fracture or uneven growth
  - abnormal development of the bones' growth centers
  - abnormalities of the bone articulations in the feet, poorly treated sprains, wearing poor-fitting shoes, etc.

## Home Vertebral Examination

Here is an easy examination of the spine that you can do at home with your adolescent child:

1. Your child should be in a standing position, with his back turned to you.
  - a. Observe the general balance of the pelvis, shoulders and head. The shoulder blades should be symmetrical, at equal distance from the spine, neither “flared” nor “winged” out. The arms should fall with a slight rotation, equal on each side of the body, the palms of the hands slightly facing backwards.
  - b. Have your child slowly bend forward from the waist and with the knees straight, so that the tips of the fingers can touch the toes. While bending forward and coming all the way down, observe the child’s head, shoulders, back and pelvis : they should remain symmetrical and balanced. Imbalance at any stage of the movement deserves your full attention.
  
2. Observe your child walking and running. Both movements should be graceful and smooth.
  - a. As the right leg moves forward, the left arm should flow easily forward. The next step of walking should find the left leg moving forward and the right arm flowing smoothly forward.
  - b. If this movement doesn’t alternate smoothly and/or the adolescent appears to look awkward while walking and running, further investigation is warranted.

The key to a good solution is to recognize these imbalances early in their development, in order to evaluate them properly and to correct them as soon and as completely as possible.

Furthermore, preventive care of these spinal dysfunctions helps your adolescent to feel better, to preserve health at its best, and to perform better and more easily.

Chiropractic is the natural, right method to make the necessary corrections of these problems.

**For more information, please contact me at:**

**Healing Facilitation ®**

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