

scoliosis

AWARENESS & EDUCATION COMMUNITY CAMPAIGN
2026 - 2ND EDITION



maccabi
LIFE

FAMILY TOOLKIT

Let's give our kids the best possible future.





scoliosis

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW

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 - About the Forward Bend Test
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 - Watch Scoliosis Educational Videos
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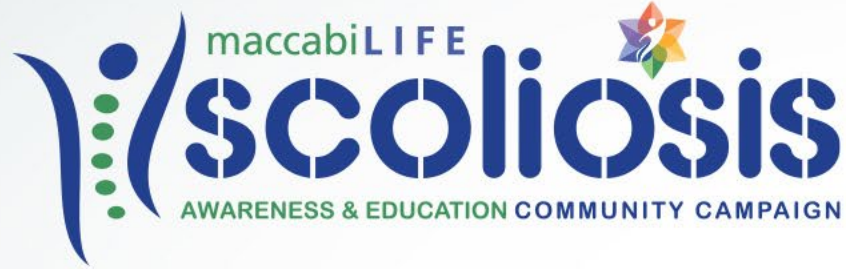


30
SECONDS



***30 SECONDS
Could Change
Your Child's Life.***





Why is this toolkit important?

Like with all medical intervention the importance of early detection in scoliosis is crucial. Raising awareness and educating children, parents, grandparents and educators on the signs of scoliosis could significantly change the life of a child.



INTRODUCTION

Did you know?

1. Scoliosis impacts infants, adolescents and adults but the primary age of onset is between the ages of 10 and 15
2. 3 or 4 out of every 100 children will be diagnosed with scoliosis
3. It only takes 30 seconds to test your child for scoliosis – anyone can do it, anywhere, any time

Due to a lack of scoliosis screening and awareness, Maccabi LIFE recognised an important opportunity to educate and create awareness on this topic in our community.

Before government funding was removed nationally in the 1990's, screening for scoliosis used to take place in schools. As a result, screening of children no longer takes place and early detection through testing is missed. This lack of testing has resulted in many children going undiagnosed with their condition worsening over time to the point where they may face the difficult choice of having to undergo major spinal surgery.

We partnered with renowned Paediatric Orthopaedic Surgeon Dr Angus Gray to develop and implement a national community awareness campaign on scoliosis.

The campaign provides screening and early detection knowledge, helping families achieve diagnoses before symptoms present, and provide the best possible outcome for every child through early detection.

We are proud and honoured to have partnered with over 22 Jewish Schools, Organisations and Programs to spread the word together and give our children the best possible future.

We are committed to creating a positive outcome for our community by educating and raising awareness among children, parents, grandparents, and educators.

We aim to make testing and early detection part of every family's annual health and wellness routine.

NEXT STEPS

Forward Bend Test

It only takes 30 seconds to test your child for scoliosis.

On page 2 of the Fact Sheet is instructions on how to perform the Forward Bend Test on your child.

If you have any concerns following the Forward Bend Test see a trusted GP, Paediatrician or Physiotherapist.

Dr Angus Gray's recommendation to Parents:

- Be aware that the referring clinician does not always need to arrange an initial X-ray. It is ok just to send your child to the scoliosis specialist, who can arrange one later.
- Let the spine specialist arrange the images. If your GP, Paediatrician or Physiotherapist wants to do an X-ray, then it is far preferable to request an EOS scan as it has 100 times less radiation than a traditional scan. If an EOS scan is not available, then plain "digital" X-rays are the next best option.
- Not to let the GP, Paediatrician or Physiotherapist falsely reassure that the curve is "small" or "nothing to worry about" without an X-ray. This is especially the case in growing children.





ADOLESCENT SCOLIOSIS SPINAL CURVATURE

How to Detect Scoliosis

Information for adolescents aged 10-14 years and their parents

What is scoliosis?

Scoliosis is a lateral or sideways curve of the spine. The spine also rotates on its long axis as it curves. The age range when scoliosis first appears can be different for girls and boys because boys tend to start their adolescent growth spurt a bit later. It usually develops during early adolescence (age 10-12 years for girls, or 12-14 years for boys) when growth is most rapid.

What is the cause of scoliosis?

The cause is unknown, but 80-90% of cases occur in otherwise healthy adolescents. This is called adolescent idiopathic (cause unknown) scoliosis (AIS). 90% of patients are females but this can occur infrequently in males.

We know that scoliosis is NOT contagious and NOT caused by bad posture, a soft mattress, carrying a heavy school bag or eating junk food.

Why is early detection important?

While very small curves are common and of no significance, about 2% of girls have a curve which warrants

medical observation during the growth period. Three girls per 1,000 will require treatment during the growth phase. Any boys with scoliosis need review by a medical specialist.

If treatment is required, the earlier it is undertaken, the better the long-term result. This is the basis for screening since in the early stages scoliosis produces no symptoms.

The best way to detect scoliosis is to look for it!

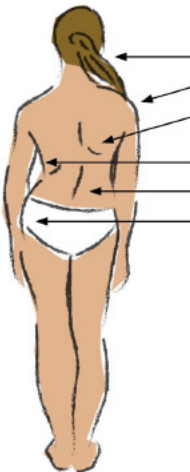
Detecting scoliosis

This information is designed to make adolescents and their parents aware of the outward signs of scoliosis.

If after reading this Fact Sheet you or your parents think you may have this condition, please consult your family doctor.

It would be helpful if you could show this Fact Sheet to your school and request them to consider downloading it from the Scoliosis Australia website at www.scoliosis-australia.org and distributing it to students aged 10 and 12 years, or linking to the Fact Sheet in their school newsletter.

What are the outward signs of scoliosis?



Outward signs of adolescent idiopathic scoliosis in a girl with a right thoracolumbar scoliosis



How scoliosis is detected

Apart from the outward signs with a teenager standing as illustrated, the reliable **Forward Bend Test** is used in the diagnosis of scoliosis.

This simple visual examination requires the teenager to stand with the feet together and parallel and bending forward as far as she/he can go with the hands, palms facing each other, pointed between the two big toes.

In scoliosis, one side of the upper chest (thoracic) region or the lower back (lumbar) region will be **more than 1cm higher** than the other. The prominence is most often on the right side in the thoracic region.

If the difference between the two sides is less, it is highly unlikely that a significant curvature is present and the difference is simply due to asymmetrical growth of the two sides of the body. This is torso asymmetry and is of no significance.

What about brothers and sisters?

Scoliosis tends to run in families. When a curve is detected in one member of the family, other children should also be examined by the family doctor. If there is a history of a blood relative, especially a female cousin, having been treated for scoliosis by brace wearing or surgery, then this strengthens the case for spinal examination as a regular health check between 10 and 13 years of age.

Scoliosis which requires treatment is far less common in boys than in girls. The ratio of boys to girls requiring treatment is about 1 to 10.

Is treatment successful?

Yes, modern methods produce excellent results when a curve is detected early. In most cases an inconspicuous spinal brace is worn. Surgery is needed in only one out of three cases which require treatment.

There is no scientific evidence that physical therapy (exercise programs) and spinal manipulation (chiropractic adjustments) will either correct a significant scoliosis or halt its progression.

What will happen if scoliosis is not treated?

The curve may increase unnoticed during the growing years. Moderate and severe curves may also increase in adult life, on average 15 to 30 degrees.

Some curves may increase with pregnancy. Severe pain, physical deformity and wear and tear arthritis may occur during middle life. Early detection is important for a healthy future.

How do you detect scoliosis?

Simply look for it! It only takes 30 seconds.

Fact Sheet

DOWNLOAD [HERE](#)



Scoliosis Australia is a project of the Spine Society of Australia



The Scoliosis Australia website is supported by a donation from Evolution Surgical



Next Steps

Scoliosis Awareness and Education Q&A Videos

Watch the Maccabi LIFE Awareness and Education campaign Q&A videos with Dr Angus Gray, Paediatric Orthopaedic Surgeon and world leading expert on scoliosis, to learn everything you need to know about screening and early detection, helping your family achieve diagnosis before symptoms present, and providing the best possible outcome for every child through early detection.





Next Steps

Specialist Directory

Through Scoliosis Australia, a state-by-state directory has been prepared with recommended accredited specialists.

[Specialist Directory – Scoliosis Detection Screening Management Treatment \(scoliosis-australia.org\)](http://scoliosis-australia.org)

This website, founded by a team of Scoliosis specialists, including Dr Angus Gray, Paediatric Orthopaedic Surgeon, Sydney Orthopaedic Specialists, is a comprehensive resource for paediatric and adolescent patients with scoliosis, and their parents and It offers in-depth information about scoliosis - how to detect it, the causes, symptoms and treatment.

For more information on Scoliosis, please visit the Scoliosis Australia website.

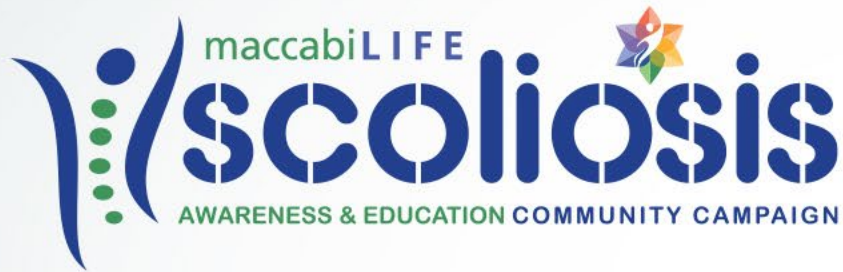
www.scoliosis-australia.org



As a community, we are always stronger when we work together. We are Maccabi PROUD to have partnered with over 22 Jewish Schools and organisations across Australia on this important campaign who dedicated their time and effort to sharing the topic of scoliosis with their families and community networks.



THANK YOU



Testimonials



Dr Angus Gray

Paediatric Orthopaedic Surgeon, Sydney Orthopaedic Specialists.

“Did you know that 3 or 4 in every 100 children and adolescents will be diagnosed with scoliosis?

I’m honoured to have been invited to be part of the Maccabi LIFE Scoliosis Awareness and Education community campaign. Our mission is to create national awareness and provide families with important facts and tools on self- testing. With your support we will raise scoliosis awareness for families in your organisation and the community, helping them to achieve early diagnosis and intervention. I look forward to your support and working together on the Maccabi LIFE Scoliosis Awareness and Education community campaign.”





Dr Jonny Taitz

Specialist General Paediatrician

“As a proud supporter of Maccabi and a member of our Jewish community, I am honoured to support the Maccabi LIFE Scoliosis Awareness and Education Campaign. As a paediatrician, I have referred many patients to Angus Gray and cannot emphasise enough the importance of increasing awareness of scoliosis within our community.”



Lauren Ehrlich

Chair, Maccabi LIFE

“As Chair of Maccabi LIFE, I am proud to endorse this very important community campaign on scoliosis. Having been tested myself for scoliosis as a child at school, Maccabi LIFE recognises the need to raise awareness, educate, and provide families with the knowledge and tools to help them achieve an early diagnosis that can potentially help every child in the community. Since the Australian government withdrew funding and compulsory testing for children in schools in the 1990’s, it has become even more critical to create awareness with the aim to reduce the number of late diagnoses.

As someone who has volunteered in our community for more than four decades across a range of organisations, I truly appreciate the vital role you play as a community leader. Thank you for joining our scoliosis campaign—together, we can build stronger awareness and make a meaningful impact across our community.”





Joleen Teperson Program Director Maccabi LIFE

Mother of daughter with scoliosis

“As Maccabi LIFE Program Director, this campaign is extremely meaningful and close to my heart as my family has experienced scoliosis first hand. My journey with scoliosis was a traumatic one having missed early detection with my daughter. At the age of 14 and a spinal thoracic curve of 49 degrees we were left with no other option but to have major spinal surgery in 2020 with Dr Angus Gray. As a result of my daughter’s diagnosis, we were able to test her sister in the recommended pre-teen years and she too was diagnosed with 18-degree scoliosis however through this early detection her curve and growth was monitored by Dr Gray over a 2-year period for possible bracing. Fortunately, we were given the all-clear with no further intervention required. Having two very different experiences with both my girls has given me the learned experience of just how important early detection is in managing and treating scoliosis. There is a significant lack of awareness in the community around scoliosis and I’m extremely passionate in educating families and helping make a difference to the lives of our children.”



Lana Ilsar

Physiotherapist

“Early detection of Idiopathic Scoliosis is so important in its management and treatment. As a physiotherapist who has worked with children/adolescents throughout the stages of their scoliosis journey, and directly with Dr Angus Gray, awareness and education is so vital. This campaign highlights the importance of this and will help to make a difference to many in our Jewish community.”





Marsha Ben Physiotherapist

Mother of daughter with scoliosis

“I have personal lived experience with having scoliosis (curvature of the spine) and eventually undergoing correction surgery in my mid-30s. Having scoliosis did not stop me from becoming a physio, traveling, or from having a family. Once I had children, I monitored both of them for any signs of spinal curvature. Unfortunately, my daughter started developing scoliosis in her pre-teen years. Thankfully, I knew what to look for and where to seek help. I knew that early detection and close monitoring would give her the best chance of appropriate management. Many families have never heard of scoliosis and only notice a curve in their teens after it's too late to do anything (other than surgery). I feel very passionate about increasing awareness and screening for scoliosis in pre-teen and teenage children in the Jewish and the wider community.”



Sarah Singer

Mother of daughter with scoliosis

“Every family’s journey with scoliosis is different and for me it was really hard as a mum having to watch my daughter spend much of her teen years dealing with scoliosis. I urge you all to spread awareness of scoliosis within our community. Early detection is incredibly important, so I encourage parents to know the signs to look for and then what to do next.”





Mimi Shifroni

Mother of daughter with scoliosis

“Our family has experienced the scoliosis journey first hand when our daughter Jasmine at the age of 14 was diagnosed with severe scoliosis. It was detected by my eldest daughter who noticed a curve in Jasmine’s spine while they were trying on swimming costumes. At the time of detection, we went to many specialists in the hope that non-invasive options would still be available to us but by the time it was detected she had a severe double curve measuring 48 degrees at the top and 53 degrees at the bottom. By this stage her case was beyond any form of non-surgical treatment.

Jasmine underwent a full spinal fusion from T2 to L2 in 2020. This was done by the incredible Dr Angus Gray. This was a long, painful and traumatic experience for the whole family. This so easily could have been detected earlier if she had been tested or if we were aware what to look out for. We were told that had it been found when the curvature was less advanced Jasmine may have been a candidate for bracing and physical therapy. Jasmine is now 19 and leads a full and fabulous life but her journey has been difficult and painful for all of us and may have been very different if we had been educated in scoliosis detection. We now closely monitor our youngest son as he grows, and we encourage all our friends to do so. It is so incredibly important to create awareness and education and I'm confident that by doing this we can make a big difference to the lives of many young people who will be affected by scoliosis. Proper treatment before bone growth is complete makes such a huge difference, and I'm hopeful that our difficult and traumatic experience will lead to improved education and awareness resulting in early detection for those young people in our community affected in the future. Knowledge is power.”



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Shelley Kamil

Mother of daughter with scoliosis

“I cannot speak highly enough about the importance of pre-screening for Scoliosis. Being vaguely familiar with Scoliosis as a Pilates Instructor, I first noticed a slight curve in my daughter’s back when she was 12-years-old. By June, the following year on a trip to Bali, just as she turned 13, I noticed something was seriously not right. I took her to my physio who insisted on an X-Ray which showed a thoracic curve of 64 degrees. We were referred to Dr Michael Johnson and unfortunately with the severity of her curve impeding on her heart and lungs as well as it rapidly increasing in the coming months to over 75 degrees, despite exploring all other alternatives, we were left with no other choice but to operate.

I cannot put into words the intensity of Spinal Surgery. For our daughter, and for our family. Many tears were shed. And though our daughter showed remarkable strength, courage and resilience it is not a surgery I would wish upon anyone. Our daughter grew 6cm overnight post-surgery. Today she is tall, strong and full of life. Though we were blessed with an incredible surgeon who did the most amazing job, her recovery was no less than harrowing. We have already begun the screening process on our second eldest daughter who is now 12. My hope is that Scoliosis awareness increases, and that early detection and screening is made accessible to all young people, in the hope that the trajectory of even one young life is changed.”





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THANK YOU

*For supporting our Scoliosis Community Awareness Campaign,
and helping us **spread the word.***



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