

SCOLIOSIS:
STAYING
AHEAD OF
THE CURVE
CREATIVE
CHARCUTERIE
WINTER VIRUSES



RSV,

Infants under 6 months have a much harder time with RSV. Their lungs and airways are much smaller. Airflow is more easily blocked by the inflammation that occurs when their immune systems respond to the virus.

WINTER VIRUSES ARRIVE EARLY

the Flu & You

RSV (respiratory syncytial virus) and the flu (influenza) were already on the rise in late summer and fall of 2022, and pediatricians are seeing significant severity as far as the duration and hospitalizations needed for all ages, but especially for kids under age 3 and the elderly.

“The typical seasonality that we thought of for winter viruses has been flipped on its head since the COVID-19 pandemic, so it’s been difficult to know when the rising number of cases will level out and trail off, or if they’ll surge again,” said Karen Chilton, MD, Chief Medical Officer, WakeMed Children’s.

“We really weren’t seeing RSV and the flu during the pandemic because the various steps taken to prevent the spread of COVID-19, such as social distancing and wearing masks, were effective; very little was being passed around in terms of germs and viruses,” said Dr. Chilton. “Then we saw an unexpected spread of RSV in the summer of 2021 as society started to open back up.” Following that summer surge, Dr. Chilton said there were not a lot of RSV cases in the winter months of 2021-2022.

Before 2020, it was fairly typical to have a more serious season of winter viruses every five years or so, but the timing has traditionally been from winter into spring with a rise around the holidays and a peak in January or February. “Our bodies were presented with these viruses on a more regular basis, which over time helps us have a more robust response when we get sick,” said Dr. Chilton. “Now you could say our immune systems are a little out of practice, and to further complicate things the timing of these viruses is less predictable.”

Slow the Spread

There is a lot of uncertainty about what to expect next winter with the flu and RSV. Communities are already seeing an alarming number of hospitalizations for serious and life-threatening respiratory illnesses. It’s important for everyone to keep practicing the basics of germ spread prevention,” said Dr. Chilton. “Stay home when you are sick, and don’t send kids to school or daycare when they have any illness or symptoms. And make sure everyone washes their hands frequently and thoroughly.”

RSV SYMPTOMS

Typically, RSV presents with symptoms similar to the common cold, but it can be far more serious for people with compromised immune systems. The body's response to RSV causes inflammation in the airways. Symptoms usually show up 4 to 6 days after infection and can take a couple weeks to resolve.

When infants can't breathe, they can't eat well. Dr. Chilton says that changes in feeding or the number of wet diapers are a big indicator that parents should watch for as they monitor symptoms. Dehydration is a concern with RSV and the flu. Here are symptoms to look for in all ages:

- Runny nose
- Coughing
- Sneezing
- Wheezing
- Reduced appetite
- Fatigue
- Possible mild fever

Prevention Priorities

- Wash your hands; stay vigilant about good hygiene
- Stay home when you're sick
- Cover your nose and mouth when you sneeze or cough
- Wipe down hard surfaces where the virus can survive for hours
- Be conscientious about being around vulnerable people, including infants, elderly people and those with compromised immune systems

FLU SYMPTOMS

Usually recovery from the flu takes between a few days and two weeks; however, other complications can develop. An ear or sinus infection could result from the flu, and other more serious complications such as pneumonia can become life threatening and require hospitalization.

- Fever or chills*
- Coughing
- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Muscle or body aches
- Headaches
- Fatigue
- Vomiting or diarrhea (more common for children)

* Not everyone with the flu will have a fever.



More Healthy Steps

Dr. Chilton recommends families focus on their overall health and well-being year-round.

- Eat nourishing food
- Make sleep a priority every night
- Exercise and move your body throughout the day
- Get outside for fresh air
- Keep kids on track with their vaccinations
- Get your flu and booster shots



Monitoring Conditions

With multiple viruses floating around, it can be tough to know what you're facing when someone in your family starts to show symptoms. It's important to monitor what's going on, and parents should also trust their instincts to call for medical advice or seek help when they are concerned. Below are four big things to keep an eye on while caring for loved ones at home.

Breathing

Be alert to any signs of breathing difficulty such as wheezing or visible sucking in under the ribs or above the collarbones.

Feeding

Babies and older children alike might need to eat smaller amounts more frequently. Offer fluids and food more frequently.

Hydration

Dehydration is a big concern for all ages, but young children and babies are typically at greater risk when they are sick. Make sure children continue to eat well and go to the bathroom. For babies, this means making sure they have a normal amount of wet diapers. Call for medical help if you believe they are dehydrated, and they will not drink fluids.

Fever

It's important to monitor and manage a fever with the age-appropriate dosage and frequency of fever-reducing medication. Talk to your pediatrician if you have any questions or uncertainty about what your child should be given to reduce a fever. Remember, a fever is a sign that the immune system is doing its job, but if you're unable to reduce your child's fever, seek medical care.

Know Where to Get Care



"Widespread RSV and flu are putting a significant strain on emergency departments this winter," explained Andy Jakubowicz, MD, medical director, WakeMed Children's Emergency Department. "We are fortunate to have a broad network of urgent cares and emergency departments at WakeMed. I encourage families to know their options and seek care early if they or their child have concerning symptoms. Many times, symptoms can be managed by your pediatrician or an urgent care."

Scan the QR Code for helpful tips on where to seek care for you or your child's condition.



Q&A on Scoliosis

with Dr. Sami Mardam-Bey
Wake Orthopaedics

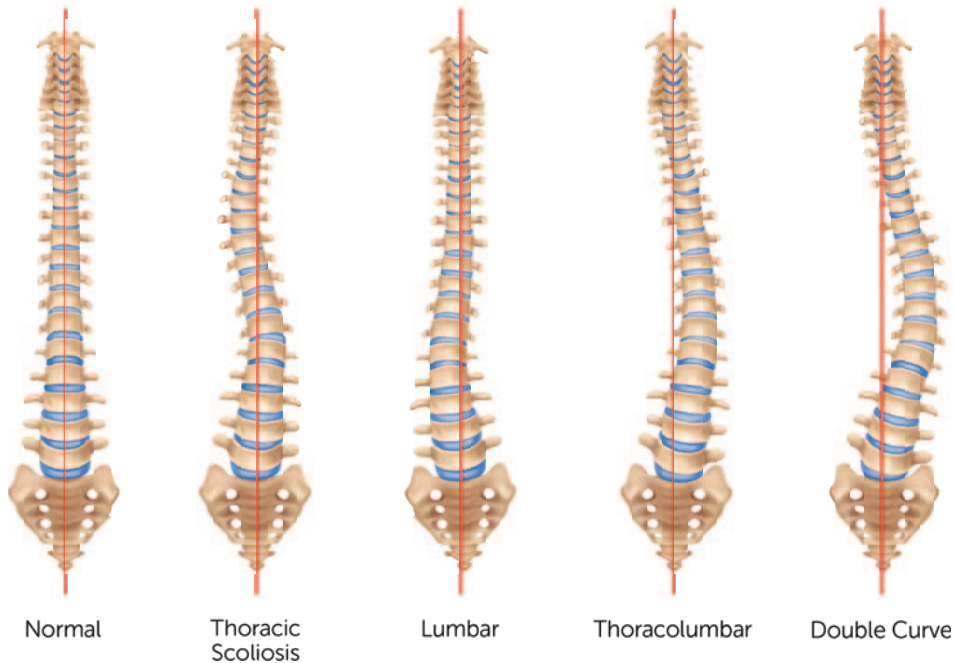
What is scoliosis?

It's really just an abnormal curve of the spine. It's fairly common, and approximately 3% of children are diagnosed with a mild or small curve (greater than 10 degrees). Only 0.3% progress to having a much bigger curve (greater than 30 degrees).

What is the cause?

We don't really know, but we do know it is related to the growth of the spine. Some babies are born with scoliosis, but the more common types develop after birth. Children are commonly predisposed and might have a very mild curve that progresses as they grow. Many times a parent or other family member has scoliosis. However, it might be much milder and may have gone undetected if it didn't progress to cause noticeable problems.

Types of Scoliosis



At what ages do children develop scoliosis?

It can happen at any age. The most common is adolescent idiopathic scoliosis, which typically develops between ages 10 to 12 for girls and 12 to 14 for boys. During growth spurts, there can be rapid progression in the curve of a spine so it's important to catch it as early as possible and closely monitor, manage or follow a treatment plan as needed.

What are the short and long-term concerns?

If a curve gets bigger and begins to distort the body, it can impair heart and lung function. That is why it is important to catch it and take steps to prevent the curve from progressing. If not properly managed and treated, the spine can also get stiffer as the curve gets bigger, which can lead to pain.

When and how are children screened for scoliosis?

Pediatricians generally screen for it, and just before or during puberty is the most common time for it to be detected.

What are the symptoms?

Contrary to what many assume, scoliosis is not typically associated with pain for children. Instead, the symptoms are visible. You might see a difference in the symmetry of the waist or shoulders, or it may appear that the child is leaning to one side. Frequently parents will notice a change in the appearance of the back or shoulders over the summer or at times when they see their kids frequently in bathing suits. There might be a visible prominence on one side of the back. For example, one side of the back might sit higher than the other when bent over.

Can adults develop scoliosis?

Some people will get diagnosed as adults, but it was probably already there from childhood. Degenerative scoliosis due to bad discs in the back is another type that can become a problem as people get older.

What are the most common treatments?

- **Bracing** is the typical treatment if the curve measures greater than 20 to 25 degrees while the child is still growing. Bracing can slow or prevent progression and is typically worn for 16 to 20 hours a day until the spine stops growing taller, which can be as early as age 14 for girls or until around age 16 to 18 for boys.
- **Physical therapy** (specifically the Schroth Method) can be used in addition to bracing to try to slow or prevent the advancement of scoliosis. This treatment involves exercises that are tailored to each patient based on their spine curvature.
- **Spinal Fusion Surgery** can be effective in preventing continued progression of the curve. Basically, the bones of the spine have movement between them, but at the part where the curve is, a surgeon will fuse them together so they cannot continue to curve more.

"If your child is diagnosed with scoliosis, they might feel isolated and need to be reassured that they are not the only one," said Dr. Mardam-Bey. "Most likely there are other kids in their school and community who are working through the same thing."

How is scoliosis treated if caught in babies or young children?

Infantile scoliosis can be treated with serial casting, which involves applying and changing a cast every 8 to 12 weeks, to help push or mold the curve of the spine. This can help prevent it from getting more severe or possibly eliminate the curve early in life. The cast works like a brace but cannot be removed until the next cast is applied.

Know the Facts!

- Treatment when needed is key. If you can keep the curve on the smaller side, the risks long term of having back pain or back issues are no worse than others.
- Remember there is nothing you or your child could have or should have done to prevent scoliosis.
- Most children whose scoliosis is properly diagnosed and managed live active, normal lives.
- Bracing has evolved over the years, the types used now have better molds and are more streamlined for children to wear both day and night. It's important to log those nighttime hours by sleeping in the brace.
- Children with scoliosis still play many sports.

"Children with scoliosis should definitely be active and get their exercise just like everyone else," said Dr. Mardam-Bey. If they need to wear a brace, he recommends simply removing it for physical activities and sports. "Take a break from it and play!"



MEET THE EXPERT

Dr. Sami Mardam-Bey is a fellowship trained pediatric orthopaedic surgeon at Wake Orthopaedics. He received his bachelor's degree from Princeton University and attended medical school at Duke University. His clinical interests are in both operative and non-operative treatments of conditions of the spine (scoliosis and spondylolisthesis) and hip (dysplasia and impingement, Perthes disease, and slipped capital femoral epiphysis). Dr. Mardam-Bey was a competitive swimmer from childhood through college. He enjoys taking care of young athletes and understands the challenges of caring for the unique injuries of growing children.



FESTIVITIES & FOOD

The holidays are full of tasty traditions and delightful treats that should be enjoyed, but at times it can all be overwhelming or even lead to an overindulgence that leaves us with an uncomfortable, sluggish feeling. WakeMed Dietitian Meredith Ebersohl has some great tips for keeping things simple, balanced and truly enjoyable.

She recommends finding ways to slow down and really appreciate the tastes as well as the smells, sounds, and textures of those holiday favorites. Whether it's a snack or a meal, Ebersohl says being mindful makes all the difference.

You're likely to feel a lot better about your holiday festivities when you take the time to really savor both the food and the special moments together.

"When we try to do it all and go nonstop, constantly grabbing a handful of this or that, it's a recipe for dissatisfaction when what our bodies and minds really need are nourishment and a satisfied feeling," said Ebersohl.

Ebersohl explains that people experience both physical and pleasure hunger, and it's important to tune in to both. We can get enjoyment from simply seeing a beautiful display of food or the smell of a home-cooked meal or a seasonal scent such as cinnamon or peppermint. A little indulgence can go a long way, so make conscious choices about when and what you eat as well as what it is you're craving. It could be a crunchy, salty, or sweet food, or you could be nostalgic for the memories you associate with those foods.



Prioritize & Simplify

Decide what you really care about and meal prep when possible to help balance both your time and your menu. "Pick a few family favorites and make those the priority," said Ebersohl. "Make those special things your centerpiece!"

Find creative ways to provide nourishing options to complement your favorites and don't worry so much about all the other things you think you should or could have on the table.



A SWEET BALANCING ACT

Try these tips and tricks to keep things nutritionally balanced while enjoying delicious and fun treats of the season.

- Make a dessert sampler plate with bite-size portions of your family's favorites, and garnish it with some nuts and fruit.
- Fill fancy glasses, little bowls or even paper holiday cups with fruit and yogurt; then top it with a favorite cookie.
- Mix nibble-sized portions of a favorite holiday treat in with a healthy amount of nuts.

Tip: Time these treats strategically between meals while playing a family game or sitting by a fire.

Stress & Hunger Pitfalls

As families and friends gather for the holidays, it's important to steer clear of stress-inducing situations. Avoid over-planning or overcommitting to the point that everyone is exhausted. Ebersohl encourages parents to try to keep kids on their usual eating routine and to anticipate those moments when hunger and emotions are likely to collide.

If you're going to be a guest on someone else's schedule, pack easy yet healthy snacks such as fruit, pre-cut veggies and nuts. Parents can also let family and friends know when their children usually eat or even volunteer to take care of a meal to help keep things on track.

"Breakfast should be a priority," said Ebersohl. "Keep that on time and make it a good, healthy start to help with the rest of the day." If you'll be away from home, consider packing starter supplies such as oatmeal packets or offer to set up a fruit and yogurt bar in the morning for everyone.

Remember that younger children are much more likely to be hungry more frequently than everyone else. They will likely need to eat every 3 hours so plan for frequent mini-meals. Even if it seems like the next meal is pretty soon, it's better to put out a healthy snack display than to let kids (or even adults) go too long without eating. So serve up your salad or appetizer as a balanced snack tray and keep those hangry feelings away.



MAKE AHEAD MUFFIN TIN EGGS

INGREDIENTS

- 2 to 3 cups chopped veggies (options: spinach, peppers, onions, tomatoes, mushrooms)
- 8 large eggs
- 1/4 cup milk
- 1/2 cup shredded cheese
- 1/8 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/8 teaspoon onion powder
- Salt and pepper to taste

- Spray muffin tin with cooking spray and set aside. Preheat oven to 350°F.
- Put all ingredients in a large mixing bowl and whisk to combine.
- Fill each opening in the muffin tin 3/4 full and bake for 25 to 30 minutes until a toothpick comes out clean.
- Let cool before eating or freeze to reheat on a busy morning.

CREATIVE CHARCUTERIE

The items you find on a charcuterie board at festive gatherings have really evolved. Nowadays, almost anything goes! “There are so many ways to set up a charcuterie board, tray or plate, and if well-thought through and balanced, a meal can be served in this easy and fun way,” said Ebersohl. “It’s actually a great make-ahead option during the hustle and bustle of the holidays.” She encourages getting the kids involved in setting up the trays and to have fun with themes and trying new things!

The trick is to couple foods together in a balanced way that will make your body feel good later. Remember the five food groups and envision them on a board as you decide what combination you’ll serve.

8 Great Plates to Make

- Create a festive wreath of antipasti skewers with rosemary sprigs
- Make a lunchtime charcuterie with your favorite sandwich or salad items
- Build a deconstructed taco tray with meat, beans, veggie toppings and salsa
- Add chicken or shrimp skewers to a pre-made Mediterranean display of olives, veggies, hummus and a yogurt dip like Tzatziki sauce
- Cut fruit and cheese into holiday shapes or arrange on a fun-shaped tray.
- Serve a platter of tiny sandwiches along with sweet treats and herbal tea
- Place a pumpkin yogurt dip inside a little pumpkin with a tray of apples, gingersnap cookies, dried fruits, nuts and seeds
- Skip the plate altogether and offer individually portioned charcuterie cups

SPRINKLE IN JOY! It’s the holidays, so toss a few cookies or peppermint sticks on a hearty charcuterie tray or add something sweet to roasted nuts. Forget about making the meal come before dessert. Ebersohl says sometimes we unintentionally make the vegetables the bad guys. Cookie crumbles, cranberries, dark chocolate bites, or even a few sprinkles combined with more nourishing foods can go a long way toward a much happier holiday!



Easy Oven-Free Recipes

Get little hands involved with these family-friendly recipes.

Deviled Hummus Eggs

Make deviled eggs using just two ingredients! Cut a hard-boiled egg in half and stuff with a mix of the cooked egg yolk and hummus (instead of mayonnaise and mustard). Kids love to mix up the filling, and the exact amount of hummus doesn't really matter. Just mix it to the taste and texture your family likes. These deviled eggs can add extra protein to your typical hummus and veggie plate.

Homemade Ranch Dressing

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup plain yogurt (nonfat or low fat)
- 1 teaspoon dried parsley
- 1 teaspoon onion powder
- ½ teaspoon garlic powder
- ½ teaspoon black pepper
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon vinegar

Mix all ingredients together and enjoy!

VARIATIONS

- Top with chopped or dried chives.
- Add water to thin dressing or use Greek yogurt for a creamy Ranch dip.

Get the Kids Involved

While everyone is at home and feeling snacky, have fun! Make a snack plate together and enjoy it.

- Count out items as you create a tray.
- Fill cupcake liners for a colorful display of snacks.
- Let them use tongs – they're great for motor development.
- Build fun but nutritious bento boxes for travel days.
- Make a picnic tray to enjoy on the floor while wrapping gifts or playing games.

Beans & Greens Hummus

INGREDIENTS

- 1 can white beans or chickpeas, rinsed and drained
- 1 cup fresh spinach
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 medium ripe avocado
- Juice from 1 lemon
- 2 cloves garlic (optional)
- Salt & pepper to taste

Mix ingredients together in a food processor. Add water to the mixture if needed to help it blend. Serve with whole grain tortilla chips or fresh veggies.

Chocolate Energy Bites

25 bites

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup rolled oats
- ⅔ cup toasted unsweetened coconut flakes (optional)
- ½ cup peanut butter (may substitute any nut or seed butter)
- ½ cup ground flax seed
- ⅓ cup honey
- ¼ cup unsweetened cocoa powder
- 1 tablespoon chia seeds (optional)
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract

Combine all ingredients in a mixing bowl. Roll into bite-size balls and arrange on a baking sheet.

Let set in the refrigerator for at least 30 minutes.

Enjoy the bites immediately or transfer to a container and store in the fridge for up to a week.





Love
LIGHT

GIVE A STAR, A WISH, A LIGHT

WakeMed
Foundation

Make a Difference for Families at WakeMed Children's

For more than 30 years, members of our community have supported the programs and services at WakeMed with a Love Light Tree gift. These gifts are a great way to give back to your community to honor, celebrate or thank a nurse, physician, colleague, friend, child, or special relative. A Love Light gift is also a very special way to remember a loved one.

A gift to WakeMed Foundation helps our team create a better patient experience and bring extra smiles and comfort to children and parents.

Visit www.wakemedfoundation.org or scan the code.





Backpack Safety

Lighten The Load

Heavy or improperly worn backpacks can lead to pain and injuries for kids and adults. When kids carry too much weight, it can lead to poor posture and issues with the back, shoulders, neck and other parts of the body.

- **Choose carefully** The backpack itself should not add much extra weight to your child's load. Try it on before you purchase it. It's helpful for older kids and adults to shop with someone who can see how it fits from different angles.
- **Wear both straps (not just one)!** Only using one shoulder to carry a backpack can cause muscle imbalances and serious back, neck, and posture problems.
- **Make sure the straps are tight** so the backpack is not too low or loose. It should sit at or above the waist and not down to the buttocks. Straps should not loosely hang or swing on the back.
- **Don't overpack** Keep the weight to no more than 15 percent of the carrier's bodyweight.
- **Place heaviest objects closest to the part of the bag that is against the back.** Avoid placing heavy objects too high or low in the backpack.

How You Can Help

Ongoing support for the growing health care needs of the patients at WakeMed Children's is made possible through the generous donations of readers like you to the WakeMed Foundation.

To learn how you can support the expansion of WakeMed Children's services, please visit the WakeMed Foundation at www.wakemedfoundation.org or call 919-350-7656.



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Warning: If a backpack causes a child to lean forward or backwards, it is too heavy! Lighten the load and have them carry a few things in their arms close to their chest to reduce the weight!

“Prevent injury and pain with some simple precautions and safety steps.” said Tracy Mooring, PT, WakeMed Rehab

So Many Straps!

Let's unravel any confusion about all those straps on backpacks.

Chest Straps – Some backpacks have these to help connect the two shoulder straps, which further distributes weight and brings the backpack closer to the body.

Waist Straps – Look for these at the base of some backpacks.. They should be wrapped around the hips and clipped together just at or below the belly button.

Padded Shoulder Straps – Some backpacks have this extra padding to help distribute the backpack weight across a larger area of the chest and shoulder and can make a backpack more comfortable.

Check the Width!

Straps should easily stay on a child's shoulder. If they are sliding off, they're too big or wide. If they are digging into their shoulders, they're too narrow and will not distribute the weight very well.

Backpacks on Bikes

If a child must wear a backpack while riding their bike, Mooring says it is of utmost importance that the backpack is worn properly. Make sure it is snug against the back and not too low or heavy!

Advisory Panel for Families First

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Karen Chilton, MD, Chief Medical Officer,
WakeMed Children's

Bridget Donell, MD, Medical Director, WakeMed Physician
Practices – Pediatric Critical Care and Hospital Medicine

Amy Griffin, MD, Wake Emergency Physicians, PA

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North Carolina Symphony Young People's Concert Beethoven Lives Upstairs

Saturday, January 7; 4 pm
Meymandi Concert Hall, Raleigh
Sponsored by WakeMed Children's

A madman has moved in upstairs, and young Christoph and his uncle are on the hunt to find out just what's going on up there. Explore the world of Ludwig van Beethoven with music from his greatest works— "Moonlight" Sonata, Für Elise, the Ninth Symphony, and more.

For tickets information, visit ncsymphony.org

WakeMed Children's Teddy Bear Clinic

The team from WakeMed Children's invites you to join them prior to the concert for a special Teddy Bear Clinic. Bring your favorite furry friend for a little TLC. From band-aids and splints to X-rays and hugs, we have just the right treatment to get your cuddly friends on the road to recovery.