

Glossary

TERM	DEFINITION
Adams forward bend test	A clinical exam to identify scoliosis by revealing asymmetry or signs of a rotation and curvature of the spine. The patient bends forward and the provider examines the patient's back from behind.
Adolescent idiopathic scoliosis (AIS)	Idiopathic scoliosis that is diagnosed between the ages of 10 and 18.
Advanced practice provider (APP)	A health care provider who is not a physician but who performs medical activities typically performed by a physician. This includes a physician assistant (PA) and a nurse practitioner (NP), both medical professionals who complete graduate schooling, have greater medical privileges than nurses, and work on the care team.
Alternative treatment	A treatment used in place of conventional medicine.
Alveoli	The air sacs in the lungs that allow for the exchange of oxygen and carbon dioxide.
Anatomical plane	An imaginary division of the body that divides the body into cross-sections; used to show divisions of the body and describe location of structures and direction of movements.
Apical vertebra	The vertebra that is the furthest away from the center of the body for a given scoliosis curve.
Axial plane	An anatomical plane that separates the upper and lower halves of the body. As the observer looking at the axial plane of the body, you are above a standing person, looking down at the top of their head. Also called the transverse plane.
Cardiopulmonary	Referring to the heart (cardio) and lungs (pulmonary).

Cobb angle	The most commonly used measurement for quantifying the size of a spinal curve, also called the curve magnitude.
Complementary treatment	A treatment used together with conventional medicine.
Computerized tomography (CT) scan	A noninvasive imaging technology that uses a series of X-rays to create detailed images of the bones and soft tissues.
Congenital	Referring to a condition that is present from birth.
Congenital scoliosis	Scoliosis that develops due to errors in vertebral development.
Connective tissue	Tissue that connects, supports, binds, or separates other tissues or organs; examples include bone, blood vessels, cartilage, ligaments, and tendons.
Coronal plane	An anatomical plane that separates the front and back of the body. As the observer looking at the coronal plane of the body, you are looking at a person who is facing you straight on or away from you. Also called the frontal plane.
Disc degeneration	A breakdown and thinning of the intervertebral discs.
Early-onset scoliosis (EOS)	Scoliosis that is diagnosed prior to 10 years of age.
Evidence-based medicine	The conscientious, explicit, and judicious use of current best evidence in making decisions about the care of individual patients.
Facet joints	The area along the back of the spine where two vertebrae meet. Like most joints in the body, facet joints provide movement and flexibility to the spine.
First-degree family member	A parent, child, or full sibling.
Growth-friendly treatment	A type of spine surgery where the scoliosis curve is straightened, and expandable metal rods are inserted and lengthened over time for continued curve correction.
Growth plate	Area of active, new bone growth that is made of cartilage and turns to solid bone when growing is done.

Halo gravity traction	A multistage treatment for severe scoliosis to stretch and straighten the spine and soft tissues (skin, muscle, ligaments) prior to scoliosis surgery.
Health care transition	The planned process and skill-building to empower adolescents and their families to navigate an adult model of health care.
Health-related quality of life (HRQOL)	An individual's or a group's perceived physical and mental health over time.
Hyperkyphosis	Excessive rounding of the spine, typically in the thoracic region.
Hyperlordosis	Excessive arching of the spine, typically in the lumbar region; can also develop in the cervical region.
Hypokyphosis	A loss of kyphosis and the presentation of an abnormally straight or flat spine, typically in the thoracic region.
Hypolordosis	A loss of lordosis and the presentation of an abnormally straight or flat spine, typically in the lumbar region.
Idiopathic	Relating to a disease of unknown cause.
Idiopathic scoliosis	Scoliosis that develops from an unknown cause.
Infantile idiopathic scoliosis (IIS)	Idiopathic scoliosis that is diagnosed between birth and age three.
Intervertebral disc	A cartilage structure that sits between vertebral bodies and offers shock absorption during movement, as well as increased flexibility.
Intervertebral foramen	The opening between each vertebra that allows nerves to branch off the spinal cord and travel to other parts of the body.
Juvenile idiopathic scoliosis (JIS)	Idiopathic scoliosis that is diagnosed between four and nine years of age.
Kyphosis	An outward curvature of the spine, rounding away from the center of the body.
Long-term surgical complication	Problems that may occur after the individual has been discharged from the hospital and may develop over the course of months or even years following surgery.

Lordosis	An inward curvature of the spine, arching toward the center of the body.
Lower instrumented vertebra	The lowest vertebra (closest to the tailbone) that is instrumented (has screws or hooks) in it.
Magnetically controlled growing rods (MCGRs)	Adjustable metal rods that can be lengthened via a magnetic external remote control and are attached to the spine with screws or hooks.
Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI)	A noninvasive imaging technology that produces detailed three-dimensional anatomical images without the use of radiation; allows for detailed imaging of soft-tissue internal structures in the body.
Metallosis	The buildup of metal debris in the soft tissues of the body.
Natural history study	A research study that collects information about the progression of a disease over time without any intervention.
Neural axis abnormality	A condition characterized by atypical structures within the central nervous system (brain and/or spinal cord).
Neurologic injury	Injury to the spinal cord or nerves resulting in temporary or permanent loss of function or sensation.
Neuromuscular condition	A condition involving the nervous system and/or muscles.
Neuromuscular scoliosis	Scoliosis that develops secondary to a neuromuscular condition.
Nighttime hypercorrective TLSO	A spinal orthosis (brace) prescribed to be worn only while lying down, typically when an individual is sleeping.
Orthotist	A health care professional who designs and fits orthoses (braces).
Osteoarthritis	Cartilage breakdown in the facet joints of the spine.
Osteopenia	Bone density that is not typical but not as low as osteoporosis.
Osteoporosis	A loss in bone density that is significantly lower than typical for a person's age.

Pedicle	A bony bridge located on the left and right side of each vertebra, connecting the front of the vertebra to the back of the vertebra.
Physical therapy scoliosis-specific exercises (PSSE)	A type of physical therapy available to individuals with scoliosis that aims to help the individual control their posture through stretching, strengthening, posture corrections, breathing exercises, and education.
Pleural effusion	Excess collection of fluid surrounding the lungs.
Pneumothorax	Partial or complete lung collapse.
Proximal humerus ossification system (PHOS)	A skeletal maturity scoring system that observes the growth plate in the upper arm bone.
Proximal junctional kyphosis (PJK)	Hyperkyphosis that develops above the upper instrumented vertebra that can weaken the connection between the screws and bone, causing the screws to pull out of the bone and/or for the instrumentation to be prominent (visible through the skin).
Pseudoarthrosis	The failure of fusion; the failure of bones to unite properly.
Psychosocial	Referring to both psychological and social factors.
Rib phase	A description of the proximity of the rib to the apical vertebra on an X-ray; in phase 1, there is a gap between the rib and the vertebra, and in phase 2, the rib appears to overlap the vertebra.
Rib vertebral angle difference (RVAD)	A measurement of the difference in angles between the two ribs attached to the apical vertebra.
Risk factor	Any attribute, characteristic, or exposure of an individual that increases the likelihood of developing a disease or injury.
Risser sign	A skeletal maturity scoring system that observes the growth plate that forms across the top of each side of the pelvis.
Sagittal plane	An anatomical plane that separates the left and right sides of the body. As the observer looking at the sagittal plane of the body, you are looking at the side view of a person. Also called the lateral plane.

Sanders stage	A skeletal maturity scoring system that observes the growth plates in the bones of the hand and wrist.
Scoliometer	A specifically designed level used to measure the degree of vertebral rotation in the spine.
Scoliosis	A condition in which there is an atypical three-dimensional curvature and rotation of the spine of at least 10 degrees.
Scoliosis Research Society Instrument 22-R (SRS-22r)	A scoliosis-specific questionnaire on pain, function, self-image, mental health, and satisfaction with care.
Sign	An indication of a disease or condition; what can be seen by observing the individual.
Spinal canal	The hole through each of the vertebrae; where the spinal cord passes through.
Spinal fusion	A type of spine surgery where two or more vertebrae are fused (joined together) to stop curve progression and improve the angle of the curve (decrease the Cobb angle).
Spine	The skeletal, or bony, structure that surrounds the spinal cord.
Surgical risk	Complications that may occur in or shortly after surgery while the individual is still in the hospital; also called an in-hospital complication.
Symptom	What an individual describes as experiencing due to a disease or condition.
Syndrome	A group of symptoms that consistently occur together.
Syndromic scoliosis	Scoliosis that develops secondary to a syndrome.
Thoracic height	The length of the thoracic region of the spine.
Thoracic insufficiency syndrome	The inability of the thorax (spine, ribs, and sternum) to allow for normal breathing or lung growth.
Thoraco-lumbo-sacral orthosis (TLSO)	A spinal brace made of molded, rigid plastic that extends from the armpits to the pelvis, not limiting hip motion; used to stop scoliosis curve progression.

Traditional growing rods	Metal rods that are manually lengthened during surgery under general anesthesia.
Triradiate cartilage	A skeletal maturity scoring system that observes the growth plates in the hip joint.
Upper instrumented vertebra	The highest vertebra (closest to the head) that is instrumented (has screws or hooks) in it.
Vertebrae	Individual bones of the spine with a hole in the middle for the spinal cord to pass through.
Vertebral body	The column-shaped part of the vertebra that bears the majority of the load or body weight.
Vertebral body tethering (VBT)	A type of spine surgery where screws are inserted and a rope (tether), that is under tension, is attached to the convex side of the scoliosis curve (the outside of the curve).