

# Shriners Children's Highlights Innovation and Early Detection to Advance Scoliosis Care

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TAMPA, FL, UNITED STATES, June 18, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- June marks Scoliosis Awareness Month, a time when Shriners Children's shines a light on a spinal condition that affects thousands of children and adolescents across the world each year. When caught early, scoliosis can often be treated non-surgically through bracing or physical therapy, especially in younger children. More advanced or progressive curves may require surgical solutions.



Image of Dr. Amer F. Samdani talking about scoliosis treatment with patient, Ethan.

"It's a sneaky condition," said Dr. Scott J. Luhmann, a pediatric orthopedic surgeon at Shriners Children's St. Louis. "It can be easy to miss. Many parents are focused on acute illnesses or injuries, and scoliosis just isn't on their radar unless there is a family history. Often, a curve is first noticed during a trip to the pool, or by a friend or coach. From there, it's important to see a specialist because typically the sooner it's caught, the better our chances of correcting the condition without surgery."

Shriners Children's treats more than 10,000 children with scoliosis each year and performs over 1,000 scoliosis-related surgeries annually. The nonprofit healthcare system has also been at the forefront of developing innovative new procedures and treatment options to help patients avoid intensive surgeries such as spinal fusion. For example, vertebral body tethering (VBT), which was pioneered at Shriners Children's Philadelphia, is a non-fusion procedure that helps correct spinal curvature as the patient grows. Additionally, ApiFix is a newer minimally invasive procedure that allows patients to return to their normal activities in as little as three months.

"Our doctors specialize in musculoskeletal conditions and that level of expertise allows us to lead the way in developing and refining the care options that are available for patients," said Dr. Amer



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*Dr. Scott J. Luhmann, Shriners Children's St. Louis Orthopedic Surgeon*

F. Samdani, Chief of Staff at Shriners Children's Philadelphia. "Our goal is to correct the curve while also getting that child back to doing what they love as soon as possible. The new technologies and procedures we're using not only help some children avoid invasive surgery but also allow them to return to activities that might not be possible after spinal fusion surgery."

In addition to ApiFix and VBT, the nonprofit health system offers a variety of surgical treatment options for scoliosis and non-surgical management like halo traction, a method that attaches a metal ring to the patient's head to gently straighten the spine. They also offer bracing to slow curve

progression, and customized scoliosis-specific exercises as part of their scoliosis treatment programs.

Scoliosis typically appears in children between the ages of 10-12 years old or just before puberty begins. Dr. Luhmann stresses that if your child does receive a scoliosis diagnosis from a healthcare provider, seeking additional care opinions is important.

"If something doesn't feel right, trust your gut and get a second opinion," said Dr. Luhmann. "Many families come to Shriners Children's for that reason. While we are experts in spinal fusion surgery, which can be the best treatment for some patients, we're continuing to innovate and evolve to provide more scoliosis care options. As a parent, you should never feel guilty about seeking more choices. It is about doing what's best for your child."

Scoliosis symptoms to look out for:

- One shoulder blade higher than the other
- The appearance that the head is not centered with the rest of the body
- Uneven hips or one hip sticking out more than the other
- Pushed-out ribs
- Difficulty breathing due to a reduced available area for lung expansion
- Back pain and discomfort
- When bending forward, the appearance that the two sides of the back are different height

#### About Shriners Children's

Shriners Children's improves the lives of children by providing pediatric specialty care, conducting innovative research, and offering outstanding education programs for medical professionals. Children with orthopedic conditions, burns, spinal cord injuries, and cleft lip and palate are eligible for care, regardless of the families' ability to pay or insurance status, and receive all care and services in a compassionate, family-centered environment. For more information, please visit [shrinerschildrens.org](http://shrinerschildrens.org).

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