

# Vertebral body tethering for idiopathic scoliosis in children and young people

Information for the public

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[www.nice.org.uk](http://www.nice.org.uk)

This procedure can only be done as part of a research study. This is because there is not enough evidence to be sure how well it works or how safe it is, but there are concerns about serious complications.

Your healthcare professional should talk to you about the research.

Scoliosis is the abnormal sideways curving of the spine, which in most cases has an unknown cause (idiopathic). It usually develops in childhood and early adolescence and can lead to deformity of the chest wall. In this procedure, under general anaesthesia, screws are put into the vertebral bodies (bone discs that make up the spine). A cord is fixed (tethered) to the screws and pulled taut restricting growth on the long side. This allows the spine to grow faster on the short side so that the curve is gradually corrected. The aim is to correct the scoliosis before the person reaches adulthood and their spine stops growing.

## Is this procedure right for me?

You should be included in [making decisions about your care](#).

Your healthcare professionals should explain the risks and benefits of this procedure and how it is done. They should discuss your options and listen carefully to your views and concerns. They should offer you more information about the procedure. Your family or carers can be involved if you want or need them to be.

You will be asked to decide whether you agree (consent) to have the procedure. Find out more about [giving consent to treatment on the NHS website](#).

## Some questions to think about

- How many appointments will I need?
- What are the possible benefits? How likely am I to get them?
- What are the risks or side effects? How likely are they?
- Will I have to stay in hospital?
- What happens if it does not work or something goes wrong?
- What happens if I do not want the procedure?
- Are other treatments available?

## More information

- [NICE's information on interventional procedures guidance](#) explains what an interventional procedure is and how we assess it.
- [NICE's information on interventional procedures recommendations](#) explains what only in research means.

The [NHS website](#) may be a good place to find out more.

This organisation can give you advice and support: [Scoliosis Association UK](#), 020 8964 1166.

You can also get support from your local [Healthwatch](#).

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