Algorithm: Scoliosis

Suspected scoliosis

Is there a thoracic or lumbar rib hump on Adams forward bend?*

YES

Scoliometer reading* over 5 degrees?

YES

Obtain 2 view standing PA/LAT spine radiograph

Is Cobb angle >20 degrees?

YES

Refer to orthopedics to be seen within the next 2-3 months

NO

Is the child under 10 years of age

YES

Refer to orthopedics to be seen within the next 2-3 months if Cobb angle >10 degrees

NO

Recheck in 6 months

NO

Unlikely scoliosis, recheck exam in 6 months

Cobb Angle Recommendations

<10 degrees: Spinal asymmetry, no treatment needed
>10 degrees: Scoliosis
>15-20 degrees: Bracing may be recommended
>50 degrees: Surgery may be recommended

If curve is unchanged, repeat images every 6 months until skeletally mature or until curve grows, at which point should be referred to orthopedics to be seen within 6 months. Curves between 10-20 degrees may not require treatment but should be monitored.

If Cobb angle measurements are not included in the radiology report, please ask radiologist to measure, or refer to orthopedic clinic or contact the orthopedic surgeon-on-call for further evaluation and recommendation.

* Watch this video for a demonstration of Adam’s forward bend and scoliometer reading.