Dear Parent/Guardian:

The Ozaukee County Public Health Department will conduct scoliosis screening in all Ozaukee County schools within the next few weeks. Screening will be provided for 6th and 7th grade girls and 8th grade boys. If you are unsure of the screening dates at your child's school, please contact the school office.

The purpose of this screening is to detect an abnormal curvature of the spine in an early stage, with hopes of preventing rapid progression. Five to ten percent of the general population is affected by scoliosis, which usually has no known cause. As scoliosis occurs most commonly around the early adolescent growth spurt, girls in sixth and seventh grades, and boys in eighth grade are screened. Parents of children who have earlier or later adolescent growth spurts should watch for signs of possible abnormal curves of the spine. More information about scoliosis is noted on the backside of this letter.

To screen for signs of possible abnormal curves in the spine, your son/daughter will be viewed from the back and side. These abnormal curves may include excessive kyphosis (“hump back”) of the upper spine, excessive lordosis (“sway back”) of the lower spine, and scoliosis (S or C shaped curve of the spine) in the upper or lower back. It is necessary for the full spine to be viewed during screening. To respect the student’s privacy while being screened, boys will be allowed to wear shorts and socks. Girls can wear a bra, shorts and socks. If girls choose not to wear a bra, they may wear a form-fitting swimsuit that allows the spine to be viewed easily or they may drape a shirt around their neck to cover the chest area for privacy. If your child is found to have signs of a possible spinal curve, he/she will be re-checked in school by a Board Certified Orthopedic Physician at no cost at a later date. Parents of students who are re-checked will be notified of the physician’s recommendation by mail.

Should you choose not to have your child screened, please send a written notice to your child’s school prior to the screening date. If your child is absent for screenings, they will be screened on the day we have scheduled with the Orthopedic Physician. If your child is unable to be screened on any of the scheduled days, you may call our department to schedule an appointment for a scoliosis screening by a Public Health Nurse at no charge. You will not be notified if your child has not been screened.

If you have any questions or concerns, please call the Ozaukee County Public Health Department at 284-8170 or 238-8170 between 8:30a.m. and 5:00p.m. Monday through Friday.

Sincerely,

Ozaukee County Public Health Department

(OVER for additional information)
QUESTIONS & ANSWERS ABOUT SCOLIOSIS

Q What is scoliosis?
A It is a lateral (sideways) curvature of the spine, resembling an S-curve or C-curve.

Q Is scoliosis a disease?
A Not in the sense you may be thinking. You don't catch it, and it doesn't develop because of anything you did or failed to do. It is usually discovered during the early teen-age years, at the time of normally increased growth.

Q How is it noticed?
A Scoliosis usually presents as an imbalance or asymmetry of the trunk or waist crease. Sometimes the first indication that something is wrong is an awareness that clothing doesn't fit properly.

Q Is scoliosis very common?
A In the U.S. and Canada approximately 10,000 growing children are currently under treatment for scoliosis. Usually the condition is so mild that treatment is not necessary.

Q Are there different types of scoliosis?
A Eighty-five percent of the time the condition falls into the category of IDIOPATHIC SCOLIOSIS, which means it is not due to another disease. Fifteen percent of the time, the scoliosis is caused by something else. Because there are different types and different causes, it is important that a doctor diagnose the reason for the scoliosis. He will want to be certain that it is not a symptom of something more serious.

Q Can scoliosis happen to anybody?
A For some reason nobody understands, scoliosis is about 8 times more common in girls than it is in boys. Most idiopathic scoliosis first develops between the ages of 10 and 15. If the curvature is in the upper part of the back, the chances are again eight or nine times as great that the curve will be to the right. If the curvature is in the lower part of the back, there are the same chances it will curve to the left. We don't know why, but it does.

Q Is scoliosis hereditary?
A There is a tendency for it to run in families. When a case of scoliosis is diagnosed, it is a good idea to have the backs of any sisters or brothers checked.

Q Can scoliosis be cured?
A No, however, if treatment is indicated, the curve can be controlled by treatment methods available. A mild curvature that shows no signs of progressing will not require treatment. Mild curves usually go undetected by the untrained eye.

Q Does scoliosis mean an operation?
A Usually not.