

# Scoliosis

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**S**coliosis is the permanent twisting and side-ways curvature of the spine that occurs in between 1 and 15% of the population. However, the degree of severity at which scoliosis requires treatment is not precisely defined. The cause for scoliosis is also unknown in most cases (85%), but chances of recovery are higher the earlier physiotherapeutic treatment is started. This article is, of course, concerned with scoliosis in connection with the use of DIDYMOS wraps.

## **Ms. Engel-Majer specialist children's physiotherapist comments:**

Babywearing and scoliosis is a touchy subject. If a child with scoliosis is carried in a wrap, people are bound to pass judgement. Unfortunately, the erroneous story that carrying a child in a wrap will actually cause scoliosis is still circulating. Ms. Kirkilionis has impressively refuted these claims and I am not aware of any study that has investigated the effect that being carried has on existing scoliosis.

It is my opinion that these children should be carried as the effect of the movement and the reaction to the change in position can have a positive effect on their condition. The most important thing, as with any other child, is to tie the wrap correctly. The child should have ideal support, therefore the front-wrap-cross-carry tying technique is the best option. You can influence the posture of the spine by shifting the weight to the appropriate side.

So if the child sits crooked in the wrap on account of his scoliosis, it can help if you wiggle his bottom to the other side. Furthermore, the child will usually turn his head to his favourite side. Particularly when he's sleeping, the mother can turn his head to the other side and place the wrap over it. Some children will even allow this when they are awake. Alternatively, you can also 'black out' the favourite side so that there's nothing to see. This shouldn't be done constantly as it's important that the child uses both sides, but try to turn the head to the other side about 50% of the time.

Babywearing actually provides a relaxed situation that allows you to reposition the head like this. It's best if the mother practises in front of a mirror. A further interesting point is that as a consequence of the crooked posture associated with scoliosis, one hip (the one the head always turns away from) will not develop correctly.

The positive effect of carrying on hip development has also been well described by Ms. Kirkilionis. Even more reason to carry these children! Mother's should not be discouraged by wild statements about negative effects from babywearing – it's often helpful to ask people who make such statements for their sources.