



News From SHRINERS HOSPITALS

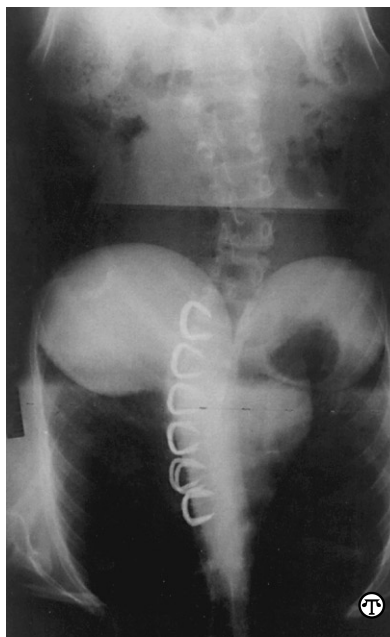
New Surgical Treatments For Scoliosis

(NAPSA)—As an alternative to bracing or spinal fusion for treatment of progressive scoliosis, surgeons at the Philadelphia Shriners Hospital for Children are investigating several methods for fusionless stabilization, or correction of spine deformity. By not having to fuse the spine to correct the curvature, movement and flexibility can be maintained, allowing for preserved motion and less chance for back pain in adulthood.

For patients with progressive scoliosis who are still growing (girls up to age 14 and boys up to age 16), intervertebral body stapling of the convex (outer) side of the anterior spine may keep the curve from progressing. This concept has been used for some time in children with bow legs and knock knees. Using staples in the spine for stabilization of scoliosis was actually conceived 20 years ago, but failed because the staples would dislodge and fall into the chest.

Improvements in technology, however, have led to development of a staple made of a memory shaped alloy (nickel and titanium). The staple is shaped like a clamp while at room temperature. When placed in an ice bath, the staple can be bent straight for insertion. After inserting the staple into the spine, upon heating to body temperature the staple returns to its original clamp shape, which prevents it from dislodging. This technological advancement has allowed physicians to reconsider its use for correction of spine deformity.

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This X-ray was taken of a 13-year-old scoliosis patient at the Philadelphia Shriners Hospital who underwent the stapling procedure. A year later, the curvature of her spine improved from 35 degrees to 27 degrees.

services totally free of charge to children with orthopaedic problems, burns and spinal cord injuries, write to: Shriners International Headquarters, Public Relations Dept., 2900 Rocky Point Dr., Tampa FL 33607, or visit the Web site at www.shrinershq.org. Treatment is provided to children under age 18 without regard to race, religion or relationship to a Shriner.

If you know a child Shriners can help, call 1-800-237-5055 in the United States or 1-800-361-7256 in Canada.