



Your First Visit to the Orthopedic Surgeon: What to ask in regards to Early Treatment with Serial Corrective Plaster Casts.

Preparing your questions before going to the appointment is necessary. However, equally important is preparing how to address the orthopedic surgeon in a calm, respectful, and positive way, despite their demeanor. Early treatment is becoming more widely accepted, but many doctors are still learning about its benefits. Also, due to the popularity of the internet, parents have more access to information that professionals are not used to us having. Do not be surprised if your doctor is careful and guarded in response to your questions.

Parents and caregivers have the unique opportunity of promoting Early Treatment to the professionals they interact with. Our greatest asset is Dr. Mehta's article. Published in the respected *Journal of Bone & Joint Surgery (Br.) Vol. 87-B, No. 9, September 2005*, this paper clearly explains the process and results of Early Treatment in terms understood by orthopedic professionals. Any orthopedic surgeon you meet will more readily respect Dr. Mehta's published research over references you make to the ISOP website. Also, the DVD, *A New Direction* is a great visual you can leave with the surgeon to borrow. With all of this in mind, here are the questions to ask:

1. What is the Cobb angle measurement?
2. What type of scoliosis is it? If no bone anomalies are present on the x-ray, they will likely say infantile, non-structural, or idiopathic (no known cause).
3. Request an MRI to rule out neurological causes for scoliosis. Also, bone anomalies are difficult to see on an infant's x-ray. Be sure it is read by the orthopedic surgeon or a neurologist.
4. If the scoliosis is non-structural, what is the RVAD measurement? Remember that typically over twenty is progressive. Ask if the RVAD has any bearing on your child's curve.
5. Is there any visible rotation in the curve?
6. If the scoliosis is structural, also known as congenital, ask for the specifics on bone anomalies or neurological factors found in the MRI.
7. Finally, what course of treatment do they suggest?

Early Treatment with serial corrective jackets/casts has proven to be a successful treatment for non-structural scoliosis. While congenital scoliosis is more complicated, there are successful treatment options to consider. Research both circumstances before your visit so you can be prepared to discuss options in a knowledgeable and calm manner.