Kay Jenkins Story… Scoliosis: Early Detection is Critical

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TITLE: Scoliosis! Early Detection & Diagnosis is Critical: Kay Jenkins Story

SUMMARY: Scoliosis Case Study of Kay Jenkins, a 27 year old woman seen as a young teenage girl but not properly diagnosed and treated until finally contacting Houston Spine Surgeon Dr. Richard Francis, Founder of Spine Associates. After a thorough examination, Dr. Francis found that Jenkins had a loss of the natural curve of the spine and her scoliosis had progressed to the point she had a 39 degree curve from T10 to L3.

CONTENT: Scoliosis, or abnormal curving of the spine, affects about 3% of people. Mild cases may not affect daily living, but severe cases can be painful and limit normal activity. The most common type of scoliosis, idiopathic scoliosis, has no specific identifiable cause. There are many theories, but none have been found to be conclusive. There is, however, strong evidence that idiopathic scoliosis is inherited. Early diagnosis and treatment is the best way to prevent curve progression.

Approximately 2% to 3% of Americans at age 16 have scoliosis. Less than 0.1% have spinal curves measuring greater than 40 degrees, which is the point at which surgery becomes a consideration. Overall, girls are more likely to be affected than boys. Idiopathic scoliosis is most commonly a condition of adolescence affecting those ages 10 through 16. Idiopathic scoliosis may progress during the "growth spurt" years, but usually will not progress during adulthood.

Most scoliosis curves are initially detected on school screening exams, by a child's pediatrician or family doctor, or by a parent. Some clues that a child may have scoliosis include uneven shoulders, a prominent shoulder blade, uneven waist, or leaning to one side. The diagnosis of scoliosis and the determination of the type of scoliosis are then made by a careful bone exam and an X-ray to evaluate the magnitude of the curve.

It is not uncommon for people who have scoliosis to either not see a doctor right away or in some cases, not see a doctor who is experienced in the treatment of scoliosis. In one case, that of Kay Jenkins, a 27 year old woman recently diagnosed with a 39 degree curve in the spine between T10 of the lower Thoracic Spine and L3, in the middle of the Lumbar Spine. Although Jenkins was seen as a young teen age girl and suspected of having an irregular curve of the spine, it was almost 15 years before she met with [Houston Spine Surgeon](http://myspineassociates.com/about-us/richard-francis-md/), Dr. Richard Francis. Dr. Francis thoroughly and properly diagnosed Jenkins and was able to begin an appropriate treatment to hopefully stop further curving of the spine and help her to deal with the ongoing pain and discomfort she had experienced for many years.

Jenkins was diagnosed with scoliosis in middle school with a then typical check up by a school nurse where the young child would bend and touch their toes with their shirt lifted up. Although this process can be a very awkward situation for anyone, it is especially so as a young girl. When the nurse suspected Jenkins had scoliosis, she contacted Jenkin’s parents and instructed them to take their child to a doctor. Unfortunately, Jenkin’s parents took her to see a chiropractor. Chiropractic care can be extremely helpful in many situations but with scoliosis, it is critically important that the patient see a qualified specialist trained in the proper diagnosis and treatment of the disease. Throughout the years as a teenager Jenkins saw a chiropractor quite frequently. The most recent visit to a chiropractor was when she was still in high school. Jenkins recollects her scoliosis had caused approximately a 20 degree curve of the spine at that point in her life.

Jenkins, now 27 years old has been experiencing increasing levels of back pain for around 5 years and for the last three years has also suffered from multiple migraines every week. It’s quite common when visiting a doctor that a patient is asked about their level of pain on a 1 to 10 scale. Jenkins’ level of pain remains at a normal minimum of 4 on the scale of 1 to 10 although it is not uncommon for her to practically go all day living on a heating pad due to the intense discomfort she experiences.

Jenkins finally decided to make an appointment with Dr. Richard Francis at the beginning of December after having a friend highly recommended him. Dr. Francis was very thorough and made her feel quite comfortable by answering her long list of questions. Dr. Francis discovered that Jenkins had a loss of the natural curve in her cervical spine and sent her in to have an MRI to make sure there was nothing causing additional problems with her spinal cord. After suspecting that Jenkins had occipital neuralgia, Dr. Francis referred her to another specialist who then confirmed that her scoliosis had progressed to a 39-degree curve from her T10-L3 vertebrae.

If Jenkins were properly diagnosed and treated by a more appropriately trained specialist when she was still a young girl, it most likely would have been discovered that the curve of her spine was progressing. In that case she could have worn a brace and probably wouldn’t be in the situation she is in now, not to mention, she certainly would not have had to live with so much pain for so long.

At 27 years old, Jenkins finds her current health issues to be very scary, but is so thankful for Dr. Francis calming her fears, answering all her questions, and educating her on the proper treatment of scoliosis. She doesn’t know if her spinal curve will continue to progress, but she does know that when she has children of her own, her experience will make her much more aware of how to watch over their health and spine. Most importantly, she has learned that she does not have to live in constant pain. Jenkins is now going through physical therapy and will continue with follow-up treatment from Dr. Francis in the following years to get her spinal curve re-measured.

Kay Jenkins states in her own words; “After years of pain and discomfort, I now know that I do not have to live in pain and with the help of [Spine Associates](http://myspineassociates.com/) I am working towards a pain free life. I would gladly recommend Dr. Francis to anyone who is suffering from any kind of ongoing back pain.”

For further information on Scoliosis or to contact Dr. Richard Francis of Spine Associates,   
please **Call 1-888-977-4625, Email to** [**info@myspineassociates.com**](info@myspineassociates.com) **or   
Visit the Website at** [**http://myspineassociates.com/make\_an\_appointment/**](http://myspineassociates.com/make_an_appointment/)