Scoliosis rarely registers on a parent’s list of worries before a child is born. But this abnormal, side-to-side curvature of the spine does occur in infants and very young children – and early detection is key to achieving the best possible outcome.

When scoliosis occurs in children under three years of age, it is called infantile, or early onset, scoliosis. Left untreated, this condition can be debilitating and even life-threatening, as the twisting spine puts pressure on the growing heart and lungs. Fortunately, help is available. A breakthrough technique known as scoliosis casting is changing the way that doctors are treating their youngest patients.

**NEW OPTION NOW AVAILABLE AT RILEY**

Riley Hospital for Children recently became the first hospital in Indiana to offer a breakthrough treatment known as scoliosis casting. In this technique, a child is placed under general anesthesia so that the body is completely relaxed. After manipulating the spine into a better position, physicians carefully apply a plaster body cast around the patient’s chest and abdomen.

This method relies on the growth potential of the young spine to correct the abnormal curvature – with the cast guiding the spine into normal alignment. The casts are changed every three to six months, gradually straightening the spine. Scoliosis casting results in a complete correction for a significant number of patients, making surgery unnecessary. Even in cases where the results are less dramatic, the cast treatment works well in delaying surgery to a time when it is safer to undertake – around age 10 for girls and 12 for boys. You can find more information and view video clips about this revolutionary treatment method at [infantilescoliosis.org](http://infantilescoliosis.org).

Scoliosis casting was pioneered by Dr. Min Mehta, an orthopedic surgeon in England who was diagnosed with scoliosis as an adolescent. She sought a treatment that was not only effective but as convenient as possible for both patients and families.

Children are remarkably resilient, and they adapt surprisingly well to this treatment. They can sleep, bathe, run and play in their casts. In other words, they can be kids.

For more information, visit [rileyhospital.org](http://rileyhospital.org).