Surgery for Adult (Degenerative) Scoliosis

One-page summary of the full Spinemathema guide. Scan the QR code for the full guide, with references and audio.

Key points

- Surgery for adult degenerative scoliosis aims to take pressure off trapped nerves and hold the spine steady with screws, rods and bone graft.
- It is only offered when non-surgical treatment no longer helps, and your overall health matters more than your age.
- BASS describes it as carrying the highest potential risks of any spinal operation currently performed. About 8 in 10 people have some complication and about 3 in 10 have a major one.
- BASS reports good relief of leg symptoms in about 7 in 10 people. Back pain relief is much less predictable.
- Expect a night or two in intensive or high dependency care, a hospital stay of a week or more, and a recovery that runs over many months.

Contact your team or seek urgent help if you notice:

- New numbness around your bottom or genitals, loss of bladder or bowel control, or new or rapidly worsening weakness in your legs: go to A&E or call 999.
- A painful, swollen calf, or sudden chest pain or breathlessness: call 999.
- Redness or leakage at the wound, clear fluid leaking with headaches, or a high temperature: contact your hospital team or GP, or call NHS 111.

Not sure how urgent it is? Call NHS 111. More warning signs: spinemathema.com/warning-signs

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General information only, not personal medical advice.
If you are worried about your symptoms, contact your GP, NHS 111, or in an emergency call 999.

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Scan for the full guide