

Keeping Bodies in Motion



MARFAN SYNDROME

by Mindy J. Siegel, M.D.

Marfan Syndrome is the inherited connective tissue disorder that affects organ systems ranging from the skeleton to the lungs, eyes, heart, and blood vessels. It has been said that connective tissue is the "glue and



scaffolding" of the body that is used to provide shape and support to many body parts. In Marfan Syndrome, the connective tissue can stretch and weaken to cause skeletal irregularities. These include a caved-in or pushed-out breastbone; long limbs, fingers, and toes (including an armspan that exceeds height); tall, thin stature; and a narrow-and/or sharp featured face. In addition, because ligaments and tendons are made up of connective tissue, joints may become overly lax, which contributes to tall stature and a tendency toward osteoporosis.

A person with Marfan Syndrome should have routine orthopaedic evaluations to detect changes in the spine and sternum, especially during stages of rapid growth, such as adolescence. Deformity of either can prevent the heart and lungs from functioning properly; in some cases, a brace or surgery may be recommended to limit the progression of deformity. For orthopaedic care, call **FRONT RANGE ORTHOPAEDICS** at (719) 473-3332. We are located at 175 South Union Blvd., Suite 200.

P.S. People with Marfan Syndrome, especially youngsters and adolescents, should be carefully monitored for curvature of the spine (scoliosis), chest deformities, and joint looseness.