

LAUREN CASE

I guess events over the years have helped me prepare for it. Maybe I knew it all along and just hadn't made the connection mentally. But I knew that my back was crooked and I knew I did NOT want surgery. My mother is a pediatric nurse and so, just as a precaution, she used to check my back for scoliosis when I was younger. She noticed my back was off all along, but not enough to get me checked by a specialist. However, right after we had moved to London, in the United Kingdom, my back started getting more crooked after a small growth spurt. So, on our visit to the U.S. we had my back checked by an orthopedic surgeon. The doctor said that it was indeed bad (23 degrees off on top and 12 degrees off on the bottom) and I needed to be seen by the brace specialists at the Orthotics and Prosthetics Office to be fitted for a brace. I was devastated. But, I knew that I did not want surgery, so if this was a treatment option to avoid it, I would give it a try. I was flying back to London two days after I was sent to Dr. Gomez for my brace, yet the amazing people there labored after hours to make a brace for me by the next day. Thank goodness that worked out, because I didn't want to worry about being treated for scoliosis in the UK, and my orthopedic surgeon told me that Dr. Gomez was the best. After a really busy two days, what had just happened sunk in, and to be honest, I wasn't happy about a plastic brace on my back. I realized it was going to be a part of life I had to deal with, so I may as well be happy about it. The brace was uncomfortable at first, but I got used to it pretty quickly and it didn't bother me too much. I am a horseback rider, and so once my brace had my back in good alignment, my position I assumed for riding my horse helped to strengthen and stabilize my back, along with other exercises. After a couple of months, I flew back for a brace appointment and my curvature was around 0 degrees. I kept getting used to my brace (thank goodness at the time puffy shirts were in style so you couldn't see the buckles of my brace!). I thought I would be made fun of at school because a scoliosis brace wouldn't be received well, but in gym class about three other people had scoliosis and it was ok. You would be amazed how many people have scoliosis! That made changing in and out of my brace for gym easy. Overall, my brace didn't impair me in any way, I wasn't made fun of, it never bothered me or made me uncomfortable. In fact, I had the best posture of anyone! Now I am back from London, I am done growing and only wear a brace

at night. I exercise a lot more than I used to (to strengthen my back.. which is key to brace success... just thought I would put that in for Dr. Gomez) and I am doing great! My back is, at the moment, 11 degrees off centre on the top and 0 degrees on the bottom and holding! I am really proud of how my brace has helped my back, and kept me from having surgery and am so thankful for all that the specialists at Orthopedics and Prosthetics, but especially Dr. Gomez, has done for me!



LAUREN

Lauren's Mom Testimony

As a pediatric nurse that volunteered my free time to do all of the vision, hearing, and scoliosis screening in my local school district, I found it ironic that the most important intervention I did was in my own home, as I was the one that caught my daughter's scoliosis. Unfortunately, we lived overseas and I was not comfortable with the treatment that was offered her there (watch, and do surgery if it gets worse). Knowing that my daughter was about the age where most young girls have their major growth spurt, and knowing that catching and correcting the curvature before the growth occurred was critical, I flew her to the US to seek treatment. Our orthopedic surgeon confirmed by x-ray my daughter's scoliosis, and sent us to Dr. Gomez for bracing, adding that he was at the forefront of bracing and the treatment of scoliosis. The staff was brilliant, and they rushed to fit a brace for my daughter before our return to London. I was willing, and did fly to Houston from London every 4 months for treatment from Dr. Gomez because I was determined to do everything possible to avoid surgery and was confident that this was the answer. We are now thrilled with the results! My daughter wore the brace until her growth stopped. The brace not only kept her curvature from getting worse, but actually corrected it to a large degree. (Which I might add, our orthopedic surgeon said would never happen, he insisted that her curvature would go back to 23 degrees after she stopped wearing the brace. In fact, he said my daughter's x-rays dumbfounded him, he said he has never seen a reversal! Thanks Dr. Gomez!) She no longer has any back pain, nor is it obvious to the untrained and sometimes even trained eye, that she has scoliosis. But, most importantly, we were able to avoid a surgical intervention. Thank you Dr. Gomez and staff for dedicating your time and talents to helping people like my daughter live a normal life. Thank you for the amazing work you do!

Cindy Morris

