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Minnesota Pediatric
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Welcome to my blog!

August 14, 2009

Hello~

Welcome to my new blog. The focus of this blog is to provide parents with the information that they need to raise strong healthy children. More information will be coming very soon. Add yourself to my followers list for updates.

Healthy living,
Dr. Ryan

Dr. Ryan J. Mairs
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What is FICPA?

August 14, 2009

So, what does the FICPA stand for after my name?
Good question.

FICPA is the acronym for Fellowship in the International Chiropractic Pediatric Association. The ICPA is a non-profit organization developed for the training of chiropractors and the promotion of chiropractic care for children and expectant mothers. They formed to provide doctors of chiropractic with the highest quality training to best equip them to care for children.

To earn a fellowship standing with the ICPA, I attended an extra year of training (120 hours) and completed an evaluation of competency. This is often referred to as being a certified pediatric chiropractor. I then completed an additional 240 hours of training over 2 years with the ICPA.

Check out the website for the ICPA at www.icpa4kids.org

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Breech Pregnancy Help

August 14, 2009

Did you know that chiropractic care can be used on expectant mothers with their baby in the breech position?

Certified pediatric chiropractors are trained in the Webster Technique, which is a technique that addresses specifically the alignment of the pelvis and therefore also the ligaments that are attached to the pelvis. Some of these ligaments are also attached to the uterus to help support it within the pelvic cavity. When those ligaments become torqued they alter the shape of the uterus. With the uterus twisted the baby inside finds the most comfortable position possible with the space available. Often that will be a position that is commonly called a breech position. Gentle chiropractic adjustments can correct the misalignment in the pelvis and relieve the torque on the ligaments allowing the baby to find a new position of comfort.

The official definition of the Webster Technique from the ICPA is that the Webster Technique is a specific chiropractic technique designed to help correct sacral misalignment, balance pelvic muscles and ligaments which in turn removes torsion to the woman's uterus, its resulting constraint to the baby, and allows the baby to get into the best possible position for birth.

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Chiropractic Care and ADHD

August 15, 2009

I just came across a great case study demonstrating the connection between the misaligned structure of the spine and the function of the nervous system.

To summarize the study, a 5 year old who had been diagnosed with ADHD and unsuccessfully treated with Ritalin, Adderall and Haldol presented to a chiropractor.

Upon x-ray examination it was revealed that the curve of the 5 year old's neck was reversed from what it should have been. After 27 visits with the chiropractor, the young boy's pediatrician stated that he no longer displayed behaviors associated with ADHD. Follow up x-rays, after 35 visits over 8 weeks, show that the normal curve was restored to the neck.

This is a great example of the kind of results that chiropractors see when we care for children. Imagine the difference that chiropractic care has made in the life of that little boy and his family.

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Great News Article on Chiropractic and ADHD

August 19, 2009

There is a video of a news article on how chiropractic can help children with ADHD. Dr. Rosen is a wonderful doctor, he was one of my instructors when I was studying with the ICPA.

The point that is being made is that if there is spinal misalignment that is irritating the nervous system, the results of that can look like what is commonly called ADHD. The child is irritable, agitated, cannot sit still, has a hard time concentrating, all of the classic symptoms of ADHD. Think about how annoying it can be to have something caught between your teeth. It is all that you can think of and your tongue just continues to go to that spot almost without thinking about it. Now just imagine how you would behave if there were always something that was irritating the nerves in your back. That signal of irritation continually being transmitted to your brain over and over again.

Often parents think that the nervous system cannot be the source of their child's distracted or hyperactive behavior because they never complain about pain in their back or any where else for that matter. One of the biggest misunderstandings about chiropractic care is that it is just for the relief of pain. The focus of chiropractic is not the relief of pain. That is often a pleasant side-effect, but not the main result. What we are trying to do is to remove spinal misalignments so that the nervous system can function the way that it was designed. What are some of the functions of the nervous system? Sensory (everything that we think of with the five senses, including pain), motor (provides the stimulus to contract muscles, both muscles like the biceps and also the muscles in the stomach), and autonomic (which means that it controls all of those bodily functions that we don't think about but are necessary for us to live). The pain sensing fibers of the nerve only make-up about 10% of the nervous system. In other words approximately 90% of the time that a nerve is being irritated by a spinal misalignment there is no pain involved.

A child may have no pain at all, but yet be experiencing irritation on their nervous system that is effecting other parts of their body.

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Can Chiropractic Care Keep You From Getting Sick?

September 6, 2009

For years chiropractic patients have told about their families having fewer illnesses while receiving chiropractic care. They report fewer cold and ear infections in their children and decrease in allergies and sinus infections in themselves. Is this a legitimate benefit to simply having adjustments to your spine?

There is an article from the magazine Psychology Today. It tells about how during the flu epidemic of 1917 and 1918 it was discovered that those people who were under chiropractic care had significantly reduced rates of dying from the flu compared to people who were not being cared for by a chiropractor. The writer, Katie Gilbert, also mentions a study in which patients infected with the HIV virus underwent six months of spinal adjustments and experienced an increase in their white-blood cell count. In the study the researchers compared these results to another group who received no chiropractic care. The second group had a decrease in the level of their white-blood cells over the same time period.

If people facing a deadly flu epidemic and with an active HIV infection experience such results, what can chiropractic care do for your family? Should chiropractic care be part of your plan to fend off the seasonal flu or the H1N1 virus?

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Chiropractic Care and Colic

September 22, 2009

Spinal manipulation is effective in relieving infantile colic.

This is the conclusion of a study done in Denmark on the effectiveness of chiropractic care for infants with colic. The researchers found a decrease in the number of hours of crying by 67%. They compared this to only a 38% decrease in a second group that was treated with dimethicone over the same time period. An interesting note is made in the discussion of the study that there were 9 drop outs in the dimethicone group and none in the adjustment group. The authors comment on this "inspection of the data in the last infantile colic profile completed before dropout show clearly that for all where information is available, the dropout was due to a genuine worsening of symptoms and not parents' bias." The effect of the drop outs and the removal of their data likely, according to the authors, made the data on the dimethicone appear better than it would have if they had remained in the study. The authors concluded their discussion with this statement: "Spinal manipulation is normally used in the treatment of musculoskeletal disorders, and the results of this trial leave open 2 possible interpretations. Either spinal manipulation is effective in the treatment of the visceral disorder infantile colic or infantile colic is, in fact, a musculoskeletal disorder, and not, as normally assumed, visceral. This study does not address this issue."

References:

Wiberg JMM, Nordsteen J, Nilsson N. The Short-Term Effect of Spinal Manipulation in the Treatment of Infantile Colic: A Randomized Controlled Clinical Trial with a Blinded Observer J Manipulative Physiol Ther 1999 (Oct); 22 (8): 517-522

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What is Colic?

September 22, 2009

The mothers of my young patients often ask me "What exactly is Colic?" That is a good question and there is still some debate as to what causes the inconsolable crying and screaming that a baby suffering with colic has. If you go on the popular site WebMD they will tell you that "Doctors are not sure what causes colic, but it may be the result of a baby's sensitive temperament and an immature nervous system."

Traditionally the word "Colic" is associated with digestive issues such as gas and bloating. However the most reliable information now says that while digestive issues may increase the baby's discomfort they are not the main cause of it. If we go back to WebMD we see that they agree "Colic is not related to health conditions, such as digestion problems. But having gas in the belly can make crying worse." The research is pointing toward the nervous system as the true culprit of the pain and discomfort. This is where we come to treatment options for your baby.

The traditional medical approach has been and still is the prescription of a gas relieving drug such as dimethicone. This approach of course addresses the aggravating factor of colic but not the primary cause. What if you can go directly after the core of the problem that is causing your baby to cry and scream? This is where a chiropractor can help out. The medical community agrees that the likely cause of colic is found in the nervous system, but they do not have a way of addressing dysfunction that can be found there. What they are left with is trying to suppress the symptoms enough so that the parent can survive until the child is older.

Chiropractors on the other hand have always worked directly with the nervous system, and to be more precise, removing the dysfunction that can occur in the nervous system. The primary focus of chiropractic care is to make corrective adjustments to the bones of the spine, in order to remove any irritation that the misaligned joints maybe causing on the nervous system. This is the same approach that we take with colicky babies. Of course the adjustments that we perform on babies are even more gentle than with older children and adults.

Babies often respond very quickly and with great results. I remember one mom who brought her son in for care. She looked tired and defeated, and I knew she had come to me as her last option. The morning after the first adjustment she called back and told us that her son had slept through the night! After a few more adjustments he no longer fit the criteria of a colicky baby.

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Ear Infections and Chiropractic Care

September 24, 2009

"My son has had 6 ear infections over the last 4 years and he is only four and a half years old. We have always given him the antibiotic that the doctor prescribed, but it seems that the ear infections just keep coming back. The doctor wants to put tubes in his ears now, but I am worried since he is so small. Maybe the doctor is right and we need to put the tubes in."

I have heard this same story over and over in my 10 years of practice. The only thing that changes is if it is a boy or girl and how many courses of antibiotics they go through before the ear tubes are recommended. It is such a difficult situation to hear about because you are presented with a parent that cares deeply for the health and welfare of their child, have done what they were told by their pediatrician and now are faced with a situation that may put their child at risk. Are there alternatives to antibiotics and surgery? Why do the ear infections keep coming back if they are getting the antibiotic? and What causes an ear infection in the first place?

I will answer these questions in the reverse order because if we start at the root cause of the ear infection the rest becomes easy to understand. An ear infection or otitis media becomes an infection when a bacteria or a virus grows rapidly within the middle ear. However those microorganisms will only grow in the ear when the conditions are right for them to do so. Every one of us has the very same bacteria and viruses in our ears that is causing the infection in the child's ear. The difference is that in a child that has an ear infection they have a build up of fluid within their middle ear. This fluid which naturally forms in the middle ear to continually wash out the unwanted microbes, will sometimes get backed up within the middle ear cavity. When this happens, the fluid that is present is ideal for the bacteria and viruses to grow in. The primary reason for the back up of fluid is inflammation causing a narrowing of the Eustachian tube. The Eustachian tube is the small passage way that drains that fluid out of the ear and into the nasal passage. The swelling and nervous system dysfunction associated with a spinal misalignment is a likely cause of that Eustachian tube narrowing. Here is a great visual slideshow demonstrating what I just spoke about. [Ear infection slide show.](#)



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Ear Infections and Chiropractic Care (Cont.)

September 24, 2009

Why do the ear infections keep coming back if they are taking the antibiotic? If the ear infection is due to a bacterial infection the antibiotic will be able to kill the bacteria, but they will not be able to do anything for the fluid that is present. This means that it just takes another bacteria or perhaps a virus, to find its way into the middle ear and start to grow the way that the last one did. This leads to further antibiotic use and the cycle continues on. The next step then is the introduction of tubes in the ear drum to try to relieve the pressure of the backed up fluid.

Is there an alternative to the antibiotics and surgery? Absolutely! Chiropractic care does not directly treat the infection, but gets at the heart of the problem by restoring the proper function of the ear. When gentle chiropractic adjustments are applied to areas of misalignment of the baby's spine, it allows the the inflammation around the Eustachian tube to be removed and the backed up fluid in the ear to naturally drain out of the middle ear. When the fluid is once again washing out the area of the middle ear it no longer gives the microbes a place to grow and thrive.

Stop the cycle of pain and antibiotics, seek help with chiropractic care and get at the heart of the problem not the symptoms.

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Ways To Help Prevent Ear Infections

October 6, 2009

Chiropractic care can do wonders for children who suffer with ear infections (or otitis media), but of course the best thing for the infant is to never get the ear infection in the first place. There are many things that you as a parent can do to help reduce the risk of your baby getting an ear infection. Here are just a few suggestions:

Breast feeding is probably one of the best ways to prevent not only middle ear infections but also other types of infections in infants. Breast milk contains an antibody called "secretory IgA" that is very effective in fighting off infections. This antibody is not made by infants in significant quantities, but is plentiful in mother's milk. There is a protein found in breast milk that prevents the attachment of bacteria. If a bacteria cannot attach its ability to cause an infection is severely decreased. There is evidence that the two most common ear infection causing bacteria, *H. influenzae* and *S. pneumoniae*, are prevented from attaching by this protein.

If you are bottle feeding your baby, whether with pumped breast milk or formula, try to mimic the nursing position as best you can. This will allow her to be more upright and reduce the risk of the milk backing up into her Eustachian tube (the tube that normally drains the middle ear). If baby is allowed to drink the bottle while lying on her back, say in a crib or playpen, the chances of formula backing up and providing growth material for the bacteria, greatly increases.

Another preventative measure that you can take is to improve the air quality in your home. When there is a high level of allergens and irritants in the air, they can cause inflammation in the nose and throat area. Inflammation in this area can lead to blockage of the Eustachian tubes. The use of an electrostatic furnace filter (significant investment \$100-200, but long life-span), and negative ion generators can eliminate many of the airborne allergens and irritants. Identify and eliminate sources of dampness in your home, and do everything possible to limit your baby's exposure to smoke, whether cigarette or wood smoke. The link between exposure to smoke and ear infections in infants is too great to ignore.

Preventative chiropractic adjustments can play an important role in avoiding ear infections in your baby. Not only have they been shown to increase immune system function but they also help to keep the Eustachian tube open and functioning optimally.

I hope that this is helpful in your pursuit to raise a healthy and happy child.

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Understanding The Problem of Antibiotic Resistance

October 13, 2009

Antibiotic resistance in bacteria that cause ear infections (otitis media), pneumonia, and other disease, is one of the biggest concerns in the health care world. By improving the over all health and caring for illnesses in a natural way, chiropractic care can help stem the tide of growing resistance. By limiting the reliance and unnecessary use of antibiotics, we can save the use of antibiotics for when they are needed, i.e. to save a life.

Facts About Antibiotic Resistance from the CDC

"Antibiotic resistance has been called one of the world's most pressing public health problems. The number of bacteria resistant to antibiotics has increased in the last decade. Many bacterial infections are becoming resistant to the most commonly prescribed antibiotic treatments. Every time a person takes antibiotics, sensitive bacteria are killed, but resistant germs may be left to grow and multiply. Repeated and improper uses of antibiotics are primary causes of the increase in drug-resistant bacteria. Misuse of antibiotics jeopardizes the usefulness of essential drugs. Decreasing inappropriate antibiotic use is the best way to control resistance. Children are of particular concern because they have the highest rates of antibiotic use. They also have one of the highest rates of infections caused by antibiotic-resistant pathogens. Parent pressure makes a difference. For pediatric care, a study showed that doctors prescribe antibiotics 65% of the time if they perceive parents expect them and 12% of the time if they feel parents do not expect them. Antibiotic resistance can cause significant danger and suffering for people who have common infections that once were easily treatable with antibiotics. When antibiotics fail to work, the consequences are longer-lasting illnesses, more doctor visits or extended hospital stays, and the need for more expensive and toxic medications. Some resistant infections can even cause death."

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Food Coloring and ADHD

April 8, 2010

Since the early 70's there has been a suspected link between artificial food coloring and the inability for children to concentrate. In 2005, Americans consumed 18.7 million pounds of artificial food dye. That is almost triple the 6.4 million pounds consumed in 1985. The more processing that we subject our food to the further it gets from the natural form that God designed for to give us nutrients. As an example, instead of eating fish that gives us essential fats to provide a healthy immune system and healthy brain tissue, it is chopped up and the healthy parts are either removed or destroyed by cooking it in high heat. Now instead of improving the health of the brain, we have fed the body altered fats that actually cause damage to the sensitive brain tissue.

Nutrition has been a much talked about topic in the popular media, but often that is all that it is "talk". I will attempt to take a look at some practical and maybe sometimes radical changes that your family can do to improve the health of every member.



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Definition of the Webster Technique

April 15, 2010

Below is the official definition of what the Webster Chiropractic Technique is (from the ICPA website):

Chiropractic care benefits all aspects of your body's ability to be healthy. This is accomplished by working with the nervous system--the communication system between your brain and body. Doctors of Chiropractic work to correct spinal, pelvic and cranial misalignments (subluxations). When misaligned, these structures create an imbalance in surrounding muscles and ligaments. Additionally, the resulting nerve system stress may affect the body's ability to function optimally.

Sacral misalignment causes the tightening and torsion of specific pelvic muscles and ligaments. It is these tense muscles and ligaments and their constraining effect on the uterus which prevents the baby from comfortably assuming the best possible position for birth. The Webster Technique is defined as a specific chiropractic analysis and adjustment that reduces interference to the nerve system and facilitates biomechanical balance in pelvic structures, muscles and ligaments. This has been shown to reduce the effects of intrauterine constraint, allowing the baby to get into the best possible position for birth.

Dr. Larry Webster, Founder of the International Chiropractic Pediatric Association discovered this technique as a safe means to restore proper pelvic balance and function for pregnant mothers. In expectant mothers presenting breech, there has been a high reported success rate of the baby turning to the normal vertex position. This technique has been successfully used in women whose babies present transverse and posterior as well. It has also successfully used with twins. Any position of the baby other than ROA may indicate the presence of sacral subluxation and therefore intrauterine constraint. At no time should this technique be interpreted as an obstetric, "breech turning" technique.

It is strongly recommended by the ICPA instructors of this technique that this specific analysis and adjustment of the sacrum be used throughout pregnancy, to detect imbalance and optimize pelvic biomechanics in preparation for safer, easier births. Because of the effect the chiropractic adjustment has on all body functions by reducing nerve system stress, pregnant mothers should have their spines checked regularly throughout pregnancy, optimizing health benefits for both the mother and baby.

The International Chiropractic Pediatric Association offers classes of instruction and issues its qualified attendees a Certificate of Proficiency in the Webster Technique. Only those doctors on our site maintain recognized certification status with the ICPA.

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Sawyer Sage Mairs

May 13, 2010

I want to take a moment to introduce you to the newest member of our family. Sawyer Sage Mairs was born 5.6.2010 at our home. Thank you to Dr. Amy Johnson-Grass and her wonderful staff for assisting with the birth and caring for mom and baby (and dad).

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What are Essential Fatty acids?

May 13, 2010

Not the flashiest title I know, but I think you will be happy that you took the time to find out, it may change your life, or the life of your child.

Many of you may have heard of Essential Fatty Acids (or EFA's from now on) and the potential benefit that they can have on overall health. What are they though? Basically a fatty acid is a molecule that is used by the body for a multitude of functions and in every cell of the body. They are considered "essential" because our body is not able to produce them so we need to get them from our diets.

Some of the areas that our bodies uses EFA's are the heart, the brain, the immune system and the skin. There are many more but those are some of the big ones that you may have heard about in the news or advertisements.

There are only two true families of EFA's: Omega-3 and Omega-6. The name has to do with where a certain chemical bond is located in the molecule. Sources for Omega-3 fatty acids are primarily from cold water oily fish such as salmon, herring, mackerel, anchovies and sardines, but there is also a significant amount in flaxseed oil. Omega-6 can be found in chicken, eggs, soybean oil, canola oil and whole grains. As you can probably see Omega-6 are much easier to get than Omega-3. This has lead to potential imbalances for some people. I will address that issue in a later blog.

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Back Pain in Pregnancy

May 18, 2010

Are you having back pain in your pregnancy? You have probably been told that that is a normal part of pregnancy and that you should just try to deal with it the best you can. Obviously with your body changing as much as it has been it is experiencing different stresses than it has before. That does not mean that you have to suffer through it or that you have to take medications that may effect the health of your baby. Here are some simple things that you can do to try to relieve the pain naturally. By the way it is a good idea to start practicing now, since the stress on your back doesn't usually just go away when you start carrying your baby on the outside.

1. Stay active: Always consult about exercise with you health care provider. If you were exercising before pregnancy, continue. If you were not, try to do some short walks while focusing on you posture. Keep the buttocks tucked in and the shoulders back and down as you walk. This helps to train the muscles to hold you in that position. If you have access a pool can be a great option for prenatal exercise.
2. When you are sitting don't cross your legs, slightly elevate your feet and change positions often. Watch your posture here also. Keep your shoulders back and your chin tucked in so that your head is over you shoulders. Also try to get up and move around about every 15-20 minutes, even if it is to just walk around you chair and sit back down. This will keep the muscles active.
3. When you sleep, sleep on your side with your knees bent and a pillow between them. This takes some pressure off of you low back. Also try using another pillow or a body pillow to rest your arm on to prevent twisting of the spine.



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Back Pain in Pregnancy (Cont.)

May 18, 2010

4. Limit what you lift. This one is much easier said than do usually, but if you do have to lift something squat with your legs instead of bending at your waist. If you have to hold a small child, do what you can to avoid lifting them up. Allow them to climb on a chair (if it is safe for them to do so) and then take them into your arms.
5. If the pain that you are feeling is a sharp, hot, acute pain try icing it for 15-20 minutes (with a thin towel between the ice pack and your skin). If the pain is more of a dull ache try a hot water bottle or a warm bath. If you are not sure how to describe the pain, err on the side of icing it.
6. Many moms-to-be find benefit with massage therapists that specialize in caring for pregnant moms.
7. Support belts can be helpful in certain situations, but I would recommend them as a last resort and only under supervision of your prenatal health care provider.
8. If you are still experiencing back pain after trying a few of these suggestions, consider contacting us for a free consultation, if you are in the Twin Cities area. If you are not please contact the ICPA for help in locating a chiropractor in your area that cares for mothers during pregnancy.

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How Early is Too Early?

August 9, 2011

So how early is "too early" for a newborn to be adjusted?

As soon as they have misalignment in their spine they are able to be adjusted. There was a study done to assess the percentage of deliveries that resulted in trauma to the newborn's neck. The researchers found that 12% of the babies born at that hospital, had demonstrable neck trauma. If your child falls into that 12% the number is way to high.

A simple check at the chiropractic office on the way home from the hospital, or the first trip out if you deliver at home, and you can set that newborn on the road to better health. Chiropractor's who are trained to assess infant's spines for subluxation can easily let you know if there was any trauma done to your little one's spine. If adjustments are needed we are also well equipped to start correcting the damage that was done and head off problems that may have been in store for him or her.

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Infantile Colic Help

September 12, 2011

One of the most frustrating situations that new parents can find themselves in is trying to console a child suffering with colic. A study conducted in South Africa by Mercer and Cook may point them in the right direction. Thirty infants who had been diagnosed by a pediatrician with colic were randomly divided into two groups. One group received chiropractic care while the other group did not. All infants in this study were newborn to 8 weeks old. The framework of the study was that the infants receiving chiropractic adjustments received care for a two-week period with a maximum of six adjustments.

The results of the study were very impressive. In the group that received chiropractic care, 93% of the infants had complete resolution of their symptoms within the two-week period. Even more impressive was that in a follow up survey performed one month later, none of the infants had experienced a recurrence of problems from colic. The chiropractic care rendered in this study was spinal adjusting.

Chiropractic adjustments to an infant consist of gentle pressure to restore the normal motion of the individual bones of the spine. Although the goal is the same as with adults, to allow the body to function properly, the technique is quite different. I have been trained with the ICPA and have had many years of experience adjusting infants and newborns with colic.

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How Does Chiropractic Care Help with Ear Infections? September 15, 2011

For anyone who still associates chiropractic care only with back pain, they have a hard time understanding how an adjustment can have any effect upon an infection in a child's ear. It comes down to the fact that the nerves are responsible for communication in all areas of the body. Simply, if the nerve coming from the brain and going to the tissue around the Eustachian tube (the tube that drains the fluid from the inner ear) is being irritated, it can cause inflammation around the Eustachian tube and not allow it to drain properly. When the fluid, that is naturally present, is not allowed to drain it builds up in the middle ear. This excess fluid is a great place for microbes like viruses and bacteria to grow. If an antibiotic is given, it may kill the bacteria but will do nothing for the fluid. Chiropractic adjustments on the other hand restore the normal communication of the body, reduce the inflammation and allow the fluid to drain. If the fluid is not allowed to build up the microbes have nothing to grow in.



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Case Study: Help for Child with Developmental Delay, Colic and Acid Reflux

January 3, 2012

The Journal of Pediatric, Maternal & Family Health just published a case study on a 15 month old girl that presented with developmental delay to a chiropractic office. Her developmental delays included not standing, walking or talking for her age group. It was noted that she had previously had chiropractic care for colic and GERD (basically acid reflux) which had resolved quickly.

Subluxations were found by the chiropractor in the upper neck and very low back. After 18 visits this little girl was able to walk unassisted and speak 3-4 words in Greek and English.

This is an example of how chiropractic care can help make a world of difference in a young person's life. Chiropractic care is more than pain management, it is about identifying areas of the body that are not functioning as they should and training them to work correctly again.

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Headache

January 16, 2012

So you have a headache....Your eyes hurt, your forehead is pounding, your neck is sore and tight, your scalp feels as if it is being slowly removed, lights bother you, noise sets your teeth on edge, and then there are your children, the house, dinner, your husband/wife and the daily demands of life. You would like to stop the world and get off!

Thousands of children and adults are afflicted with this headache "thing". As a matter of fact, headaches are the most common reason people seek chiropractic care. Headaches have been sold to the public as a problem which needs to be "treated", as a disease, or some sort of condition. We have gingerly been taught to believe that headaches need to be remedied. Millions of dollars of advertising are spent annually on the benefits of drugs for the treatment of headaches. And we have bought into this carefully contrived thinking. So let's look at this "headache thing" from a different perspective.

The word "Headache" simply means - ache in the head. It is NOT a disease. It is simply an ache. A pain. A symptom. I am not even remotely making light of it though - this symptom can be severe and debilitating. It is said that there are different types of headaches; migraines, cluster, tension, occipital, sinus, etc. All of them seem to have a different pattern, location, severity, and, of course drug, to deal with it.

There seems to be no weight given to the idea that there might be a reason why a person might be experiencing headaches - no weight as to the "WHY".

Let's look at this closer.

I mentioned that a headache is a symptom. It is simply your body literally "talking" back to you. We need to be able to interpret that language. Most people I meet are so busy treating their pain, they forget that it has a reason for being. A headache is a sign your body produces to let you know that it is having a difficult time handling something. The vast majority of headaches are found at the base of the head or in the region of the temples or over the eyes.



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Headache (Cont.)

January 16, 2012

As a profession we have found that the vast majority of headaches are simply signs of a vertebral subluxation - a distortion of some of the vertebrae of the neck area mostly affecting the function of the nervous system. You would be surprised to learn that most of all subluxations I see in adults and children, can be traced to a difficult delivery. We call this Traumatic Birth Syndrome. Even an average, uncomplicated delivery can be traumatic for a child and can produce vertebral subluxations.

These subluxations affect the manner in which the nervous system transmits information and can be very catastrophic. When this occurs, certain neck muscles are called into play to protect the nervous system from damage and you experience a "tension" headache. Very often, pain is transmitted to the face and people have been trained to think it is their sinuses at fault. They reach for sinus medication and the profit cascade begins. And then there is the temple, pounding pain - a migraine; again different drugs. And the headaches which come in clusters - cluster headaches; more drugs.

I am describing the vast majority of headaches. There are others, however, that are not caused by subluxations. These can be caused by diet and poor nutrition - hypoglycemia, for instance. I see many of these in my practice. Some are caused by an aneurysm, a disease process, toxicity, a tumor, etc. The point I am making is that no headaches should be taken lightly - it is always a sign that something is not OK.

If you or your child is experiencing headaches, it would take a case history, comprehensive examination and possibly x-rays to determine the reason for your headaches.

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Will Play for Donuts

February 6, 2012

I was doing some reading today on the ICPA website and came across this article. WILL PLAY FOR DONUTS It seemed very appropriate after signing two of my girls up for soccer last week.

What kind of message are we sending to our children if we feed them high sugar, low nutrition food even when they are exercising. We need to be teaching them good eating habits. Instead of giving them a cookie or pastry after working their bodies, give them fruit (sugar but with fiber to slow the absorption) or something with protein (to help build that muscle that they just worked). They will learn that they actually feel better when eating better.

If we are going to have a positive influence on the health of our children, we need to be willing to make the hard choices that are sometimes unpopular. But isn't that what being a parent is about? Making the right choices so that our children can learn how?

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Webster Technique and Breech Babies

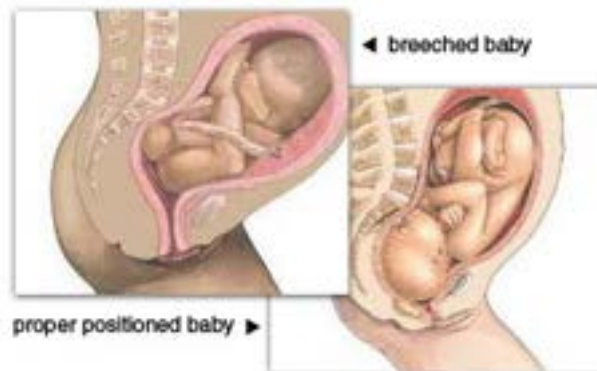
February 8, 2012

It is estimated that 25-30% of babies are in a breech position before 28 weeks, but only about 3-4% after 34 weeks. Most of the presentations before 28 weeks are likely just baby exploring her limited world. That world starts getting pretty cramped around 34 weeks so baby will naturally find the most comfortable position she can. In some cases, because of changes in the shape of the uterus, that most comfortable position is a breech position.

Breech presentation adds significant risk to baby, including risk of trauma and lack of oxygen. The common medical solution to this is to perform a Caesarean birth, but that carries its own set of risks for mom and baby. Dr. Larry Webster developed a specific adjusting technique used to realign the sacrum and remove stress from the uterus. In a study done by the ICPA (International Chiropractic Pediatric Association) they studied the cases of 61 expectant mothers that presented with babies in breech position. They found that in 70% of the cases there was a restoration of proper baby positioning.

Pregnant mothers have been finding relief with chiropractic care for low back pain and leg pain for decades, but the evidence is increasing that we can help improve many aspects of pregnancy.

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The Role of Vitamin D in Pregnancy

May 16, 2013

You no doubt have heard a lot of talk about the health effects of Vitamin D, but how does this vitamin relate to fertility and pregnancy? In a way that is a bit of a trick question because Vitamin D is really not a vitamin but a hormone.

From a structural stand point it looks very similar to the sex hormones such as estrogen, testosterone, and progesterone. Looking from a functional side, Vitamin D is used to send messages to cells and triggers a change in those cells, just like other hormones.

So what specifically does Vitamin D do? One of its major functions is to "prime" or prepare cells for other hormones to be able to work properly. This is where Vitamin D's role in conception comes in. For ovulation and conception to occur, not only do your major hormones (estrogen and progesterone) need to be in proper balance, but so to the role playing hormones, such as the thyroid hormones, cortisol, DHEA, testosterone, and yes Vitamin D.

The level of circulating Vitamin D can play a role in resolving fertility issues associated with poly cystic ovarian syndrome (PCOS) and lack of ovulation. Of course there is the other side of the fertility issue. Low levels of Vitamin D leads to decreased sperm motility and production. So guys should be tested for Vitamin D levels also if there are fertility problems.

What about when you are pregnant? One study reports evidence that Vitamin D plays a role in implantation, normal placental development and prevention of eclampsia.

You can imagine, if Vitamin D is so important to hormone activity, just how important it would be to the developing baby. Studies have demonstrated a healthy levels of maternal Vitamin D in pregnancy are associated with a decreased likelihood of asthma, respiratory infections, Type I diabetes and even multiple sclerosis.

Knowing and monitoring your Vitamin D levels pre-conception and throughout pregnancy makes sense and is easy to do with a simple at-home finger stick test that we order through our office.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ryan Mairs", with a stylized flourish at the end.

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“Normal” Pregnancy Symptoms

April 5, 2017

Low back pain, numbness in the fingers, shooting electrical pain in the legs.

Many soon-to-be moms consider these and other symptoms to be normal, expected problems during pregnancy. While they are very common, you do not have to resign yourself to the fact that they will be a necessary part of pregnancy. The simple truth of the matter is that your body is going through a tremendous change in a relatively short period of time and either adapts to it, or pain results.

The average healthy weight gain during pregnancy is between 25-35 pounds. Any time that someone were to increase in weight by that much it would likely cause pain if the spine and pelvis were not functioning correctly.

When your spine and pelvis are in alignment and moving smoothly, your body is more than capable of adapting to the changes in your body without pain. If there is a joint or a section of the spine that is restricted in motion, you lose a certain amount of your ability to absorb the stress. If you have ever worn a cast, you know that it does not take long for the joints above or below that cast to start aching. Similarly, as your body grows but portions of your spine lock up, the joints and muscles that overcompensate for the changes function differently and therefore hurt.

A great example of this is a patient that I had a few years ago. She came to see me after experiencing extreme pain on one side of her low back during childbirth with her first child. On her first visit to my office, she stated she still had pain from the delivery that was impacting her ability to even get down on the floor to play with her now toddler daughter, and she worried about the pain with future pregnancies. We started chiropractic care immediately, and since then she has been able to carry and deliver two more children without significant pain.



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“Normal” Pregnancy Symptoms (Cont.)

April 5, 2017

The best way for me to assess the balance of the pelvis is a specialized chiropractic method called the Webster Technique, learned during my additional years of study through the ICPA to be certified in advanced pediatric and pregnancy techniques. I evaluate for any twisting of the pelvis and restrictions that sometimes are associated with improper positioning of the baby and pressure on the nerves of the low back and legs. By utilizing the Webster Technique throughout your pregnancy, I can help keep your low back in balance, allowing your body the flexibility it needs to adapt to the increased biomechanical stresses it will face.

Getting started with care early in the pregnancy is better than trying to make changes at the end to compensate for pain. Let us help your body adapt to the changes gradually instead of playing catch up.

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