Growing Up Healthy with Chiropractic

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(This article is not meant to diagnose or prescribe treatment for any particular condition. Please consult with a qualified Chiropractor or MD in individual cases.)

It is a common misconception, even among educated long-term chiropractic patients, that you would consult with a Doctor of Chiropractic only after an injury or trauma, and only in cases where a DC is considered “expert,” eg low back pain or headaches. On the contrary, Chiropractors are trained in areas of musculoskeletal, neurological and orthopedic function, and should ideally be a part of a human’s health consciousness from the moment of birth.

In the first seven years of life, a child undergoes dramatic neurological growth with corresponding physical development; the brain and the body are hard wired, so to speak, for optimum functioning and adaptation during this critical period. Strong foundations and preventative treatment early on, may very well avoid the common health pitfalls in the future.

Within your body is a highway of nerves and the spinal cord which act as cables to transmit nerve impulses. Each of the estimated 70 trillion cells in your body must receive proper nerve impulses in order to function correctly. Just as a light cannot burn without the regulated amount of electricity arriving from its source, the body cannot balance properly without the correct and complete messages arriving from the brain.

Whether natural or Caesarian, birth can cause intense trauma to the neck and shoulders of the infant in an effort to extract him/her from the mother. Standard guidelines for pediatric chiropractic recommend that a child be seen at transition points of major postural landmarks, and of course after unforeseen injury. These transitions include the birth itself, holding the head up for the first time (approximately four weeks), rolling over (approximately 12 weeks), sitting up (16 weeks), crawling (approximately six months), and walking erect (11-13 months old).

In addition, multiple documented studies have cited chiropractic for its positive benefits in troublesome childhood events, such as recurrent ear infections, bed wetting past the “normal” age, asthma and allergies, and infantile colic. In the case of asthma, long term clinical trials have found that the early chiropractic treatment of a child reduces the need for medication, and limitations of activities due to shortness of breath as an adult. Chiropractic stresses the concept of preventative care rather than pain and symptom micro-management.

Education regarding posture, self-image, appropriate exercise and nutrition plays a particularly important role for adolescents, who are more prone to slouching due to peer pressure and a lack of self-worth. Female teenagers show a higher prevalence of such conditions, including idiopathic scoliosis and anorexia nervosa. Unless a trusted friend or sympathetic doctor allows a girl to express her fears, excitement and questions about her changing body, she is apt to adapt the unrealistic and exaggerated social standards for beauty.

Many pediatric conditions can be treated and corrected for the most part, if caught early enough, allowing the empowerment of the individual, and directing the patient towards positive life-long health.

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