

Chiropractic Care for Children?

By Dr. Sarah Weber, NPN member since 2009

Many think the only reason to visit a doctor of chiropractic is for a bad back, but as millions of parents know, chiropractic care has benefits for children. Is it only for when your child is hurting? Is it only for major health concerns? Not at all! Parents bring their children to chiropractors for a host of reasons, including help with common ailments such as ear infections, colic, colds, fevers, sore throats, bed-wetting, asthma or allergies; learning and behavioral problems; and general wellness and prevention.

So what is chiropractic all about?

Chiropractors identify and eliminate spinal nerve stress, also referred to as subluxations. Subluxations are serious yet often painless conditions that most children (and adults) have in their bodies. Physical, emotional and toxic stresses cause subluxations. Physical stress may start in the womb if a baby lays in a distorted or twisted manner. Traumatic or difficult births also can result in great stress to an infant's skull, spinal column or pelvis.¹ One condition this can lead to is Blocked Atlantal Nerve Syndrome, a primary cause of upper respiratory infections including ear infections and chronic tonsillitis.² The numerous tumbles children take—while learning to walk, riding a bike or participating in sports—also cause physical stress. Often, the pain from the initial injury "goes away"; however, left uncorrected, the damage incurred continues to affect the future function of the nerve system and can cause serious problems as the child grows into adulthood.¹

Emotional and toxic stresses are indirect causes of subluxations. Positive emotional stress, such as physical touch, good sleeping habits and balance in daily activities, leaves positive imprints on the nervous system; however negative emotional stress, such as anxiety, frustration and poor self-esteem, adds up and leaves negative imprints on the nervous system, weakening the body's ability to heal and stay healthy. Subluxations also are caused by toxic stressors, such as vaccinations, formulas, processed baby food, cleaning supplies and products put in or on our kids' bodies that contain preservatives and chemicals. These and hundreds of other neurotoxins kids experience daily further weaken the brain and nervous system and impede proper neurological growth and development.

Is chiropractic safe?

Pediatric chiropractic care is becoming more common. Last year, there were an estimated 68 million pediatric visits.³ However, most parents are more concerned with safety than numbers. Two recent studies from the International Chiropractic Pediatric Association sought to investigate potential side effects and health improvements in children who received chiropractic adjustments. The results of the doctors' surveys were: "Of the 812 clinical cases, 717 indicated experiencing an improvement with their presenting symptoms, while 9 patients reported treatment-related aggravations. These were described as 'soreness' or 'fussy.' No treatment-related complications were reported. Seventy-four cases had reported improvements unrelated to their presenting complaints and described as increased range of motion, improved sleep, improved immune function and improved patient mood."⁴ Chiropractic is not only one of the safest and most effective forms of health care, it's also extremely gentle. A



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chiropractor does not adjust a baby or a child the same way he/she adjusts an adult. A newborn's spine is very supple, so only slight pressure is applied to make an adjustment.

Chiropractic care sounds intriguing, but will it work for my child?

Regular wellness visits can help all children reach their optimum health potential. Examples from my own practice might show how pediatric patients benefit from chiropractic care. An eight-year-old patient receiving regular adjustments has never had a cold since he started going to school. A two-year-old boy is adjusted regularly, and when he does get a cold or fever, his fevers break and symptoms improve within hours of being adjusted. Patients also come in with specific symptoms, whether physical, nutritional or developmental. A five-year-old boy came in with asthma severe enough to require hospitalization many times in his short life. With regular chiropractic adjustments and nutritional recommendations, he now experiences asthma attacks only rarely, and they are much less severe. A 12-year-old boy diagnosed within the autism spectrum had no ability to speak, as well as other developmental delays. He developed speech and has enjoyed gains in other functions after receiving regular chiropractic care.

It's important to understand that chiropractors do not treat sickness or disease; they identify and remove subluxations, which interfere with the body's natural ability to heal itself. When a chiropractor frees the nervous system from spinal stress, the healing power of the body is unleashed: the immune system functions more efficiently, the body has increased resistance to disease, and your child's body functions better overall.¹ The body can respond more efficiently to external and internal stresses such as physical stress, environmental toxins, negative emotions and all the other stresses that he/she comes in contact with on a regular basis. Chiropractors do more than correct problems. They help improve performance by helping the body function at its optimum level—naturally, and without drugs. Doctors of chiropractic believe in taking an active approach to health by maintaining an optimal nerve system, instead of waiting for illness or disease to happen. Through regular adjustments, counseling on proper nutrition, exercise and posture, your chiropractor can help you raise a child who is structurally and functionally sound.

As a wellness chiropractor and enzyme therapist, Dr. Weber evaluates her patients, ranging from infants to the elderly, in all three dimensions of stress: physical, nutritional and emotional. She partners with each individual to create better health through chiropractic adjustments, nutritional counseling and healthy lifestyle habits.

Footnotes

1. Chiropractic and Children, Jeanne Ohm, D.C. 07/14/2004 www.icpa4kids.org/why/function.htm
2. Gutman, G., "Blocked Atlantal Nerve Syndrome In infants and Small Children," *Manuelle Medizin*, 1987
3. babiestoday.com/articles/general-health/chiropractic-care-for-babies-6316/
4. Alcantara J., Ohm J., Kunz D., *Focus Altern Complement Ther* 2007; 12: 03 Treatment-related aggravations, complications and improvements attributed to chiropractic spinal manipulative therapy of paediatric patients: a practice-based survey of practitioners