

The Wellness Express™



Jump on the train to good health

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Why Do Children Need Chiropractic?

Presented by: Creative Healing

Have we forgotten how difficult it is being a child? Just like adults, children have bones, joints, nerves and muscles that need attention from time to time. Kids also experience several major physical milestones during their first year of life that place an increased demand on the neuromusculoskeletal system – increasing the likelihood for injury and the need for chiropractic adjustments.

A child's introduction to this life begins with perhaps the most physically demanding experience he or she will ever have to endure in this lifetime – childbirth! The journey down the birth canal is demanding on an infant's body, but the combined stress of pulling, twisting and extending the neck of the child during the birthing process puts the infant's spine at risk. Add any *extra* physical stress caused by difficult or assisted births (forceps or vacuum extractions), and it is not surprising one of the most common injuries resulting from childbirth is the cervical subluxation – where one of the vertebrae in the neck becomes misaligned, irritated or painfully restricted.

What Are Common Signs of Cervical Subluxation in Infants?

The first clue that your child has cervical subluxations is if the head is always turned to one side, as with *torticollis*. More subtle symptoms of cervical subluxations may include a child's obvious preference for breastfeeding on one side only, or reluctance to turn the head to one side when prompted to do so.

We all know how painful it can be to have a "kink in the neck". However, in addition to being painful, it is important to consider that every single nerve must pass through the first cervical vertebra on its way to the rest of the body. Therefore, many other systems may be affected by upper cervical subluxations – asthma, sleeping disorders and colic are only a few of the conditions believed to be associated with childbirth-related neck trauma. Have your newborn child checked for subluxations. It is one of the most important things you can do for him or her as a parent. With a spine free of subluxations, your young child has the best chance to develop into a normally functioning adult.

Exercise of the Week

Abdominal Bridge on Exercise Ball with Forward Reach

Difficulty: Moderate to Advanced

(Consult your chiropractor before starting this or any other exercise.)

Start: Assume abdominal bridge position on exercise ball. Focus on bringing belly button inward, and holding entire body in straight line – ankles to ears.

Exercise: Roll ball forward with arms, keeping body still. As you reach forward, lower back will arch. Contract inner abdominal muscles to prevent this from happening. Return to start position, maintaining tight abdomen throughout. Repeat 5-10 times.



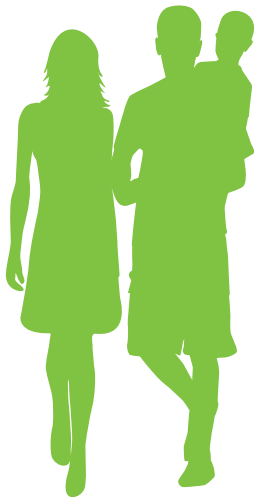
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Another stage of an infant's development that is particularly challenging on the body is when a child is beginning to crawl (usually between 6-9 months of age). Moving into a four-point stance is an important milestone, as it helps initiate the development of a proper lumbar curvature. The lumbar curve is particularly important for load-bearing activities, and it establishes the foundation for proper posture when sitting and standing.

Crawling also helps with the coordination of opposite arm-leg movements required for upright posture and gait. If there are restrictions in the pelvis or the lower back that go unchecked, then these critical movement patterns may be delayed. Any restrictions or imbalances of the spine and pelvis during this stage could lead to the development of faulty curvatures later in life – such as *scoliosis*.

Chiropractic adjustments are crucial at this stage to ensure the spinal curves are starting off in the right direction.



Learning to walk is another important developmental milestone in a child's musculoskeletal growth (between 8-12 months of age). Standing upright is a key component in the development of bone strength. Weight-bearing stimulates the production of a complicated internal latticework of bone, which provides strength. Proper bone and joint alignment ensures this is established properly right from the beginning. Fortunately, your chiropractor is an alignment specialist!

What about Accidents?

When learning to walk, most children fall down hundreds of times. Although they are more physically flexible than adults, children are still susceptible to strains from particularly awkward tumbling incidents. In addition, becoming more mobile requires getting used to the dangers of corners and edges. Children can sometimes hit their heads quite hard on these objects, and the trauma can lead to muscle-spasms and/or subluxations in their necks and upper spines. It makes sense if we want our children to grow up with strong, balanced spinal curves, a trip to the chiropractor is what they need – especially at the important developmental milestones mentioned here.



Quote to Inspire

“Just because you're not sick doesn't mean you're healthy”

- Author Unknown



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