

[IMAGE]

Chiropractic for Growing Bodies

By Kevin M. Wong, DC

Millions of adults visit chiropractors regularly - but what about children? Their developing spines and bodies cope with the bumps and bruises of learning to walk, playing sports and just being a kid. It begs the question: Have you taken your child to the chiropractor yet?

Our children are perhaps the most precious things we have in this world. It is a miracle how they are created, and we as parents, family members and friends watch these little humans grow up from infancy into adulthood.

Of the many choices we make for our children's welfare nearly every day, decisions regarding their health care are likely at the forefront. For example, there have been times when your child has had a temperature that was high enough to be of concern. How long did you sit there by yourself or with your spouse, wondering if you should take them to the pediatrician? How many times have you questioned the choices you've made for your child's benefit? As parents, it is only natural to agonize over some of these decisions. Fortunately, most things work out for the best.

Chiropractic is a facet of pediatric health care that is more popular today than it has ever been. I'm amazed by the many reactions I get from parents when they are presented with the idea of having their child adjusted. Some adults have a look of shock, disbelief and even fear, while others nod their heads and relate stories of how they've been adjusted since childhood. No matter what camp you come from, I hope to enlighten you as to why chiropractic is so positive and powerful for children's health.

Children of various ages standing in line. - Copyright © Stock Photo / Register Mark When adults get injured playing sports or have common ailments such as headaches, sore muscles, inflammation or other painful conditions, taking aspirin or popping some type of pill is often considered normal. However, when it comes to our kids, the thought process is different. I rarely meet a parent who wants their child to take over-the-counter or prescription medication unless it's absolutely necessary. As a society, we tend to be against putting a lot of chemicals or foreign substances into our kids' bodies. Instead, we look for ways to help our children as naturally as possible.

Chiropractic is a health discipline that offers an alternative to taking drugs and medications. We work with the body's inborn healing abilities and essentially allow the body to repair itself. By using our hands to gently move or realign various bones of the body, we address the source of many problems that can lead to pain. People have asked me why a child would possibly need to see a chiropractor. They think children are too young to have any structural problems. Remember, children can have the same types of injuries, problems and pain as adults. The key is to identify potential health issues early and intervene, so those problems don't follow them into adulthood.

Children are amazing in that their bodies are constantly changing and growing. At birth, a child has 350 bones. By adulthood, their bones fuse together to form a total of 206 bones. From the day they are born to around age 25, all of their bones continue to lengthen and harden. That's a lot of growing! Their organs and tissues also are growing and learning to perform bodily processes more efficiently. Their muscles, tendons and ligaments start to work as they go from crawling to standing to walking and running. Imagine the amount of work the body is going through to develop and coordinate all of these parts in your growing child. For the most part, the body does a great job keeping things going, but just like adults, kids will fall down or perform activities during the day that place abnormal stresses and strains on their little bodies.

Stress can be placed on children in the same manner it is placed on adults. It could be due to sports, sitting in the car seat for too long, falling down while they are playing, birth trauma or falling out of their crib/bed, to name a few. The important idea here is that children are not always good at letting you know they are in pain or having problems. The key is being able to make observations that indicate when you may need to have your child evaluated by your chiropractor.

Some children have a difficult delivery. As they pass through the birth canal, their shoulders, heads, hips or legs can get stuck or be placed in awkward positions. In some cases, the mother has tried hard to have a natural birth, but in the end needed a cesarean section. Even C-sections can be physically traumatic to parts of the baby's body.

When children begin crawling, they start to develop the curve in their neck. They also start developing coordination in their arms and legs. As they move into walking, you start to see them using their limbs to balance and move upright. Early in their lives, you may be able to notice some of the following signs:

- hunched shoulder on one side or both;
- head turns to one side more than the other, and your child resists or becomes noticeably uncomfortable when you attempt to turn their head to the other side;
- the hip and leg on one side kicks or moves differently than the other; and/or
- toes point inward or outward when your child walks or runs.

Two children standing back-to-back. - Copyright â Stock Photo / Register Mark As children grow older and get more involved in athletic activities, it is a lot easier to understand when a child is injured or in pain. Even without pain, many of the symptoms discussed above can cause serious problems with children's bones, joints and muscles - problems that may not be detected or become painful for years to come. Preventative chiropractic can give a child a solid foundation for the rest of their life.

Did you realize that chiropractic care, which works so well for adults, works just as effectively for children? The same treatments we administer to adults are just as safe for children. Ailments that adults commonly come into our offices with happen to children as well. Chiropractic techniques performed on children are modified so the procedures are gentler for the child's particular body type. We also can utilize exercises, ice/heat and other home-care instructions to make the parents part of the care-giving process.

Chiropractors have long cared for children. Each day, thousands of children across the world are receiving adjustments from chiropractors. It's a great way to relieve pain, restore function and keep them happy - the way children should be.

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