



The Wellness Family

Dr. Cuperus Keeps You Informed

The First Adjustment

Parents will often ask when they should bring their children in for Chiropractic care and the answer is – the sooner the better. Both prior to and during delivery, an infant has had pressure placed on their neck and spine that may affect the nerve pathways of the spinal cord. A Family Wellness Chiropractor is the only healthcare professional trained to find and eliminate vertebral subluxations and remove nerve interference, which is why more and more parents are having their newborns checked for spine-related problems immediately after birth.

In-Utero Constraint

One of the first potential causes of subluxation for an infant, in-utero constraint is what happens when a subluxation in the mother's sacrum causes the uterine wall to become less flexible. The muscles of the uterine wall do not stretch making it difficult for the fetus to move. When a fetus is stuck in one position for a lengthy amount of time, potentially months, the tissues in their necks, arms and legs may be affected by shortened tissues during growth. In addition, since they possibly can't move into the proper position for delivery, this oftentimes results in a c-section or other obstetrical interventions.

Any of the above may result in a vertebral subluxation creating nerve interference and affecting the newborn. Additionally, if in-utero constraint is not relieved prior to delivery, the infant may experience birth strain that can result in torticollis, facial asymmetry or even a brachial plexus injury.

Repetitive Stress

While birth strain is the most predominant reason to have your baby's spine checked, repetitive stress is equally important. An infant's spine will be affected by several common (and even necessary) repetitive movements, such as:

- Being placed in or lifted out of a car seat
- Diaper changing
- Being worn in an infant carrier
- Passing from one adult to another

Any of these repetitive stresses may cause a subluxation resulting in nerve interference.

Six Silent Signs of Subluxation

The central nervous system is the complex system of nerve tissues that control the activities of the body.

Messages are sent by the brain via the spinal cord to the muscles, organs and glands coordinating and influencing all the other systems of the body. Vertebral subluxation may cause nerve interference, stopping the signals from the brain to the rest of the body resulting in other bodily systems not functioning properly.

While it's true that an infant can't tell you something is wrong, there are silent signals that indicate something isn't quite right and nerve interference can manifest itself in numerous ways. Such as: difficulty sleeping; positional discomfort; weak immune system; not at



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ease or difficult to sooth; respiratory or food allergies; or digestion and elimination problems.

An infant that is displaying these symptoms may also struggle with frequent ear infections, colds, colic and more. If your infant has shown any of these signs, please reach out to a Family Wellness Chiropractor to have their spine checked.

Finding Subluxation

As early as just hours old, an infant can be checked for a subluxation pattern. A Family Wellness Chiropractor, specially trained to care for the pediatric spine, may perform static or motion palpation. This means that they will gently touch each individual vertebra either while the baby stays still (static palpation) or while gently lifting the infant's torso thus introducing motion into the spine (motion palpation). When doing this, the Doctor of Chiropractic is checking to see if the vertebra is gently moving, like a swing. If the vertebra is fixed or stuck, then that is a sign of subluxation.

Gentle, Safe and Effective

As a Family Wellness Chiropractor, your Doctor of Chiropractic has been specially trained to adapt their technique to the age, size and needs of their patient. When adjusting children, as well as geriatrics, they accommodate for gentleness and safety.

In fact, a 2011 review published in *Clinical Chiropractic* found a rate of just .53 to 1% of patients reported mild adverse events for pediatric chiropractic. Claudia Anrig, D.C., the co-editor of the textbook *Pediatric Chiropractic*, states that most mild adverse events are typically a slight tenderness as if bumping a bruise and may cause slight discomfort that would last for just a moment or two.

A survey in 2000 found that there were about 30 million pediatric visits to chiropractors and by 2009 that figure had more than doubled to 68 million. The National Board of Chiropractic Examiners determined in 2010 that about 17% of chiropractic patients are under the age of 18 and that 7.7% were aged 5 years or younger.

Finally, many parents report an improved quality of life for their children after beginning chiropractic care.

Common Questions

When considering pediatric chiropractic care many parents question how chiropractic is applicable since a baby's bones are so soft and wonder if they're too soft. Children have the same joints that adults do but they're still hyaline cartilage that will develop into bone. This cartilage is strong and, since a Chiropractic adjustment is a light and gentle touch, it is still effective.

Another common question is, "How often will my child need to be seen?" Depending upon the age of the child and the results of the doctor's gentle exam, your Family Wellness Chiropractor may recommend that your child be checked as often as a few times a week or just a few times a month. The frequency of care will be determined by the needs of your baby's spine.

Parents will also sometimes wonder if their child will need to be adjusted at every visit. This is not always the case since little ones are so resilient, they may hold the adjustment longer than an adult and an adjustment

may not be necessary at every visit. It's still recommended that their spines be checked regularly.

The First Adjustment

Infants are meant to achieve specific milestones by a certain age; for instance, supporting their own head, rolling over, crawling, walking, etc. But nerve interference may affect these milestones.

The first adjustment is the most gentle but powerful. Your baby's body was created to work in a specific way, the brain being the master controller and all the body's systems responding to messages sent via the spinal cord. If there is a subluxation causing nerve interference, then that first adjustment may make all the difference.

The Earlier the Better

Children of all ages can respond quickly to chiropractic care, but anecdotal evidence suggests that the younger the better. Since an infant's spine is still mostly hyaline cartilage, it will accept the adjustment with the least amount of force. This means that a gentle, specific adjustment will be highly effective.

Furthermore, a subluxation in cartilage left uncorrected may become more set with time as the cartilage becomes bone. There is a small window of time in which an adjustment can be the most effective and this is within the first few months of life.

Special adjusting techniques are used for each individual age group and children seem to intuitively understand that adjustments are good for them. Chiropractic care that detects and helps correct vertebral subluxation gives your child the very best chance for a happy, healthy life at any age.



*Dear Patient,
Dr. Cuperus is dedicated to providing you with the absolute best in family wellness care. So take a moment today to discuss with your Family Wellness Chiropractor any concerns you may have regarding your family's overall health and wellness.*

This newsletter is provided to you by:

Dr. Sara Cuperus
2380 Troop Drive, Suite 201
Sartell, MN 56377
320.255.0961
www.ChiroPerformanceCenter.com