



Dynamic Chiropractic – February 13, 1995, Vol. 13, Issue 04

Spinal Subluxation in Children, Part II

By Peter Fysh, DC

In the January 16th issue of "DC," we examined the causes of the pediatric spinal subluxation complex. We looked at the questions: "What is a pediatric spinal subluxation," and "What are the potential causes of spinal subluxation in kids?" In this issue, we continue to examine more of the questions which parents regularly ask DCs about their children's chiropractic care.

"What Do Spinal Subluxations Do to a Child?"

Spinal subluxations in a child's spine can have significant long-term consequences. Many adults who come to the chiropractor for the first time are found to have severely degenerated spines. The bewildering thing about these problems is that with so much spinal deterioration present, the problem must have been present for many years, probably since childhood, but frequently the patient experiences no pain until the problem reaches an advanced stage of degeneration. By including regular spinal check-ups in a child's health program, such major problems in adult life may be substantially eliminated.

"Do All Spinal Subluxations Cause Back Pain?"

One of the worst mistakes for us to make as parents is to assume that because our child is not complaining of back pain, that the child does not have a spinal problem. Just as the dentist can find many potential problems and cavities in our children's teeth and can fix them before they cause further decay and toothache, so too the chiropractor's job includes locating and fixing the subluxations in a child's spine which can later cause more significant spinal degeneration problems.

"Which Common Kids' Disorders Have Been Linked to Spinal Subluxations?"

The most common reason why children visit the chiropractor is for the correction of spinal problems associated with some of the most common childhood disorders: problems such as earache, headache, colic, asthma, bed-wetting, and growing pains. If a child is experiencing any of these problems on an on-going

basis, then a spinal check up may be the answer. If a spinal problem is the cause, then just a few treatments may make the difference.

"What Are Some of the Signs of Possible Subluxation?"

Any of the following signs may be associated with spinal subluxation:

- head tilt
- one shoulder higher than the other
- tight muscles on one side of the spine with muscles more relaxed on the other
- restricted or painful neck or back movements
- tenderness over any area of the spine

When evaluating a child, the chiropractor not only looks at the spine but also for other signs which might suggest an underlying spinal problem. Examination of the child's spine is a task which should be undertaken by a chiropractor whose years of training and experience will ensure the identification of subtle changes in your child's condition.

"Can My Pediatrician MD Find Spinal Subluxations?"

Occasionally, patients will want to know if their child's pediatrician can find spinal subluxations. Well, with the right chiropractic training, possibly they could. But just as you would not take your child to the dentist for removal of an appendix, or to the pediatrician for a toothache, so you should seek the most appropriate specialist to evaluate your child's spine -- the doctor of chiropractic.

"What Happens If Spinal Subluxations Are Not Corrected?"

Children may continue to have symptoms and other health problems due to malfunctioning spinal joints and pressure on spinal nerves. As we have previously said, degeneration of the spine may follow later, leading to more serious spinal problems.

"How Do You Fix Subluxations?"

If the chiropractor finds spinal subluxations in a child's spine, the solution is usually a simple one. Adjustment of subluxated spinal vertebrae is achieved by delivering a specific, light finger-tip thrust to the problem area. This light pressure, when carefully applied to the problem area, is usually all that is needed to

fix the problem. The treatment is quick and substantially painless.

"Is It Safe for Children to Have Chiropractic Care?"

Chiropractors have an excellent safety record, especially where children are concerned. The scientific literature records no incidents where a child's spine had been injured by being adjusted by a chiropractor. Chiropractic spinal care is one of the safest health care procedures children can experience.

"How Long Does a Child's Treatment Program Take?"

Since kids' spinal problems are usually little ones, they can in most cases be fixed within a few visits. It is, however, a great idea to have a child's spine checked several times a year, just to be sure that the traumas of growing up have not induced more problems.

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Editor's Note: Dr. Fysh is currently conducting pediatric seminars. He may be contacted at 1-800-999-7337.

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