

# OPTIMAL HEALTH UNIVERSITY™

Presented by Patrick Ryan, DC

## Kids Need Chiropractic Care, Too

*Think that chiropractic care is just for adults? Think again! Children and adolescents also reap the wellness-boosting rewards of chiropractic care. Dr. Ryan encourages patients to learn how chiropractic care helps kids of all ages grow up as healthy as possible.*



### The Word Is Out

Chiropractors, like Dr. Ryan, are seeing a growing interest in chiropractic care for children.

Recent studies show that the number of parents choosing CAM (complementary and alternative medicine), especially chiropractic, for their children is swiftly rising.

For instance, one four-month study in Alberta, Canada, which included 105 children, found that approximately one-half used a form of CAM. Chiropractic care was the most common type (*Can J Neurol Sci* 2005;32:524).

Parents reported seeking out CAM in general — and chiropractic specifically — after learning from other parents about their family's personal success stories. About 60 percent de-

scribed improved quality of life for their kids.

More good news: The study also indicates that CAM therapies are slightly less expensive than traditional care (*Can J Neurol Sci* 2005;32:524-8).

In another analysis, in Melbourne, Australia, out of 503 children surveyed, 51 percent used CAM during the preceding year. Chiropractic care was one of the most commonly selected therapies (*J Paediatr Child Health* 2005;41:424-7).

### Safe and Gentle

Dr. Ryan uses extremely safe and gentle techniques when adjusting pediatric patients. These techniques are specifically modified for your youngster's spine.

### Lessen Low-Back Pain

Low-back pain (LBP) in little ones is no minor problem. Researchers estimate that a startling 50 percent of children are afflicted sometime during their youth. Even worse: Almost 15 percent experience frequent or continual pain (*J Manipulative Physiol Ther* 2003;26:1-8).

The good news is that chiropractic care for kids works. One study included 54 children (31 boys and 23 girls) with LBP cared for at 15 chiropractic clinics. The children ranged in age from 4 to 18 years, with an average age of 13. Specifically, 61 percent suffered from acute LBP, with 47 per-

cent attributing onset to a traumatic event (most commonly sports-related); 24 percent reported pain lasting longer than three months.

Patients received **chiropractic adjustments**, specialized and precise maneuvers designed to eliminate vertebral subluxations. **Vertebral subluxations** are dysfunctional areas in the spine, where alignment is skewed and movement is limited.

The result of the chiropractic intervention? Within six weeks of beginning chiropractic care, two separate assessments revealed "important" improvement among 62 percent and 87 percent of the youngsters, respectively.

The authors conclude that pediatric patients "responded favorably to chiropractic management, and there were no reported complications." (*J Manipulative Physiol Ther* 2003;26:1-8.)

### Ergonomics and Low-Back Pain

In a study of 5,000 adolescents aged 11 to 14 years, researchers found that the top predictor for LBP was sitting for long periods in a poorly designed chair. To reduce the risk of LBP, encourage optimal posture and make sure that your youngster's chair and desk are the correct height. Also, limit television time and promote daily exercise (*J Pediatr Orthop* 2007;27:126-9).

Overloaded backpacks and school bags are additional ergonomic nightmares, which provoke spinal problems.

Ask Dr. Ryan for specific instruction regarding ergonomic parameters for your child.

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## Negate Neck Pain

It's a fact: Kids take frequent spills. Minor falls and slips are a normal part of growing up.

Fortunately — for active kids everywhere — doctors of chiropractic focus on eliminating cervical (neck) subluxations and associated pain and limited range of motion with specialized chiropractic adjustments.

## Attack ADHD

Attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) affects children's ability to focus in every aspect of their lives — from school and sports to home. Unfortunately, drugs designed to combat hyperactivity are loaded with side effects.

However, preliminary research reveals that chiropractic care may help reduce hyperactivity. As part of the analysis, seven hyperactive children received chiropractic adjustments and a “sham” placebo intervention. Scientists then used a unique wrist-watch type device to measure the youngsters' activity levels while they completed tasks simulating school work. Simultaneously, researchers used special tests to determine nervous system activity. Chiropractic clinical evaluations assessed changes in spinal biomechanics.

Compared with placebo treatment, five of the seven children improved in focus and behavior scores after chiropractic care — and four showed increased arousal and interest in completing the school-work task. The group as a whole demonstrated “highly significant” improvement.

The researchers conclude that the results are “impressive evidence that the majority of the children in this study did, in fact, improve under specific chiropractic care. The results of this study ... are not conclusive, however, they do suggest that chiropractic manipulation has the potential to become an important nondrug intervention for children with hyperactivity.” (*J Manipulative Physiol Ther* 1989;12:353-63.)

## End Ear Infections

For many young children, constant ear infections (otitis media) can be a real nuisance, provoking crying spells and fragmented sleep. The good news is that preliminary research shows that chiropractic care may prevent chronic ear infections.

One study included 46 children aged 5 years or younger with ear infections. All patients presented to one clinic and received chiropractic adjustments to correct vertebral subluxations. Care included three sessions during the first week, two per week for a week and then one session per week, terminating after improvement.

Results were dramatic: 93 percent of the episodes improved by 75 percent in 10 days or fewer and by 43 percent after only one or two sessions. The children's improvement was based on parental report of no fever or signs of ear pain or symptoms, asymptomatic report from the chiropractor or documented improvement from the child's pediatrician.

The authors conclude that, “although there were several limitations to this study, [the] data indicate that limitation of medical intervention and the addition of chiropractic care may decrease the symptoms of ear infection in young children.” (*J Manipulative Physiol Ther* 1996;19:169-77.)

## Kick Chronic Constipation

Preliminary research suggests that chiropractic care may help children with chronic constipation.

One recent study followed an 8-year-old boy with chronic constipation since birth. Traditional treatments, ranging from laxatives to high fluid and fiber intake, were ineffective.

At an initial chiropractic exam, the youngster's doctor of chiropractic detected misalignment of the hip bones and sacrum. Chiropractic care included chiropractic adjustments and abdominal massage. The patient enjoyed “an immediate dramatic improvement” after the first session. Af-

ter four weeks, the patient (confirmed by his mother) reported consistent normal bowel function.

“A follow-up call made 13 years after treatment revealed continuing normal bowel function. This case suggests that chiropractic care may be helpful in some cases of chronic constipation,” conclude the authors (*J Manipulative Physiol Ther* 2007;30:65-8).

## Be an Example

Spinal health is not child's play. Be an example to your children: Take care of your spine with regular exercise, chiropractic care and proper ergonomics. Both your health and your child's health depend on you making spinal health a priority. If your child is not currently receiving regular chiropractic check-ups, make an appointment for him or her today!

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