

Neck Problems

Your Amazing Incredible Neck

Your neck is packed with all kinds of things: bones (vertebrae), nerves, blood vessels, glands, voice box (larynx), esophagus (food pipe), trachea (windpipe), discs, connective tissue, muscles, ligaments, tendons and other structures. Your amazing, incredible neck balances your heavy head as it turn, tilts, and twists without damaging its vital occupants.

The Cervical Spine

Cervix, the Latin word for neck, means “a constricted area.” The uterus and urinary bladders also have a neck or cervix as does that part of your body that connects your head to your torso.

You have seven neck bones (also called cervical vertebrae) and they are numbered C-1 to C-7 from top to bottom. Your top cervical vertebrae, C-1, has a special name – the atlas – because, like Atlas in Greek mythology, it balances a globe, your skull. The next one is C-2 and it also has a special name – the axis – because it permits your neck to move in many different directions.

All your vertebrae work together to balance your head and protect your spinal cord, an extension of your brain that lies in your neck. This protection is extremely important because a spinal cord injury can result in paralysis or death.

Nerve Problems

Your cervical spinal nerves lie in small openings between your vertebrae. These nerves can become irritated, inflame, compressed or “pinched” if your body structure is even slightly distorted or out of its proper position. That can cause head, neck, face, shoulder, elbow, arm, wrist, hand and finger pain; numbness; pins and needles; increased sensitivity or other symptoms. The most common cause of nerve, blood vessel and spinal cord pressure is a condition chiropractors call a subluxation, where your vertebrae are slightly out of position and your nerves are irritated.

Is Your Head On Straight?

Imagine you are carrying a bowling ball. But instead of carrying it closely at your side you hold it just a few inches from your body. You’d get tired very quickly! It’s the same with your head. If it’s just a tiny bit off-center you will start to suffer from fatigue as well as stress and pain involving your neck, shoulders, lower back, discs, hips, arms, knees and feet.

Causes of Subluxations

There are many ways we can get a subluxation: a difficult birth, a fall (even as far back as childhood), an accident, working in one position for a long period and emotional tension. Whiplash injury is a common cause of neck subluxations. Whiplash and neck injury sufferers may complain of headaches; vision problems; dizziness; ringing in the ears; decreased attention span; learning and memory impairments; emotional changes; nasal tongue, and throat problems. Chiropractic care realigns the vertebrae and removes stress from nerves. Many people suffering from neck problems, including whiplash, have found chiropractic to be a blessing. As one major medical journal reports: “Whiplash injuries are common. Chiropractic is the only proven effective treatment in chronic cases.”

The most serious neck injuries – fracture, dislocation or severe tissue damage – can be fatal if not given emergency medical care. Most other neck problems, although not life-threatening, can impair your health if not corrected.

Disc Damage and Osteoarthritis

If your spine is unhealthy, you may lose your normal neck curve and suffer from pain, nerve irritation and disc degeneration. Although many doctors tell their patients that this is due to age, disc degeneration can be found in young children while some older adults are relatively free of it. One of the most common causes of disc degeneration is years of uncorrected subluxations. Over time uncorrected subluxation degeneration causes arthritic changes in the vertebrae such as lipping or spurring (bony growths), disc thinning and deterioration.

The Orthodox Medical Approach

The standard medical approach to neck pain is often painkillers, muscle relaxers and/or tranquilizers. If the pain doesn't subside, cortisone or other injections may be administered. In some cases physical therapy, neck pillows, collars or traction may be prescribed. Interestingly enough, these constitute a tacit endorsement of chiropractic approach of releasing pressure on the nerves, joints and openings through which the nerves travel.

Sometimes surgery is needed especially in serious trauma or severe disc herniation. In many cases, chiropractic techniques have saved people from neck r disc surgery. There is even evidence that chiropractic care can reverse osteoarthritis – something previously considered impossible. Surgery should only be considered “as a last resort.” Severe torticollis (wry neck); Erb's Palsy; vision problems; hearing problems; and ear nose and throat infections have all responded to neck adjustments (even in infancy).

The Role of the Chiropractor

Chiropractic care corrects a severe form of stress known as the subluxation. This restores proper movement to your spinal column, permitting greater energy, information and nutrients to flow over your nerves and tissues and throughout your body.

When corrected, your entire body begins to rebalance. That is why, for example, people with lower back problems, after receiving a neck adjustment from their chiropractor, find, to their surprise, that their low back pain not only starts feeling better (as well as many other problems) but they have more energy as well!

Just as a periodic dental checkup is necessary to keep your teeth healthy, a chiropractic checkup is necessary to ensure a nervous system that is free from nerve stress permitting you to experience greater healing and well-being. No matter what disease or condition you have, you can benefit from a healthy spine and structural system.

© 2009 Tedd Koren, D.C.
All rights reserved. TEI
Koren Publication Inc.
1-800-537-3001
Korenpublications.com