



# ADJUSTMENTS & YOUR HEALTH Dr. Ivo Ahlquist Chiropractor © 2010

In chiropractic philosophy, there is an understanding that a level of organisation or 'universal' intelligence enables all things to exist. It's what makes a chair a chair, a stone a stone, or your car a car. A small but very special subset of this intelligence is called *innate intelligence*, and it's the thing that turns an inanimate object into something living. A Hollywood movie said it weighed 21 grams, religion might call it the soul, in chiropractic it's called innate intelligence.

Innate intelligence is not well explained by traditional science, in fact it's probably at a loss even trying. You have to look to the metaphysical explanations of people like Deepak Chopra to get a better understanding of what this thing could be. What is understood in chiropractic is that innate intelligence is found somewhere in the brain, and that it's sole purpose is to communicate with the body to maintain optimal health, and to react to the environment in a way that continues a good state of health.

This communication is via the nervous system, by sending out nerve impulses from the brain, down the spinal cord and out all the multitude of nerves to all the cells, tissues, and organs of the body. A different set of nerves trace this pattern back to the brain providing information about your state of health to the brain.

To optimise your state of health it's essential that these messages can pass uninterrupted in both directions.

Chiropractic science states that the spine itself, as a structural supporter

and protector of that vital nervous system can interfere with these signal if it has problems with function.

The outdated message that chiropractors used to say was that the spine pinched the nerve, this perhaps over-simplified the idea to the extent it wasn't really true. What it does is interfere or irritate the nerve but in a much more subtle way than pinching.

Do you remember as a kid playing with two tins cans connected by



string, pulling it tight and trying to talk to each other? Your voice was transmitted as

an energy wave along the string, much like a nerve impulse passes along a nerve. If someone lightly touches the string or even pinches it, it makes it very difficult to hear the message clearly. The spinal problem known as a vertebral subluxation can cause the same problem with nerve impulses. If the communication processes in your body are interfered with then it makes it that much harder for your body to function properly and to stay healthy.

So you may not have known it, but that sore back you have is not only caused typically by a subluxation (about 90% of the time), but it's also affecting your health.

The care program that has been discussed with you represents a way to restore function and health to your spine and nervous system. The end result is not predictable, but the goal is to enhance the natural healing capabilities that your body already has. While it's easy to focus on realigning your spine, my focus is to try and maximise function—this means getting your spine moving well, reducing as much as possible any interference to your nervous

system, and retraining the supporting muscular system to keep your spine strong.

## GOOD POSTURE

A medical researcher in the US in 2003 presented findings that enabled her to predict the likelihood of early death based on one very simple measure—how far forward a person's head posture was. The worse the slumped posture the earlier the death.

Many other researchers are now supporting the physical cause of many diseases, not just the chemical caused (like infection or viruses)

We stress good posture in Chiropractic, medical research is now also helping to show why.

## OPTIMAL HEALTH

Optimal health is the highest level of health that your are able to attain, it's not perfect health as this is probably an impossibility. But it's the best you can be when you look after yourself. I'm regularly saying, you only get one chance at life, and only one body to do it in, and if you don't look after it, you're the only one who has to put up with it, so take control.

Optimal health is all about allowing innate intelligence to do it's job, but it needs good building blocks to do that. There is so much information out there on how to keep healthy, so I hope to help point you in the right direction of the more important steps you can take. Some of them are simple behavioural changes, some of them cost money. Ultimately it's up to you how much you take on board and how proactive you want to be.

There is a growing trend towards prevention and well being in health care, and as part of that movement I'm excited by the opportunity to make a positive difference to your health.

# WHAT DOES AN ADJUSTMENT DO?

**Understanding what chiropractic is about is probably one of the biggest challenges I have. Why? Because the common misconception is that we are cracking joints and that relieves pain. Even some doctors say this. And it's wrong.**

## WHAT IS AN ADJUSTMENT?

If you think of your body as a constantly moving (amazing) machine, that works because it controls things from the brain, and knows what to do because the brain gets feedback from the body on how things are going. Poor function no longer becomes a localised problem, it becomes a control pattern problem stemming from the brain. Challenging?

It means if we want to fix your problem, we have to make an impact on the control signals from the brain, not focus on the pain at it's location. If you do the latter, you wont fix the problem, but just hide the effect of it.

While most still consider chiropractic to be mechanical and musculoskeletal, it's far more appropriate to consider chiropractors as **function neurologists**. What does this mean? When an adjustment occurs it creates a localized positive change in the cellular chemistry that research shows has a positive impact on the state of your health. This stimulus helps in creating fresh feedback to the brain which can then respond positively and begin to set up a better control pattern at the area involved.

## CAN WE ADJUST JOINTS OTHER THAN IN THE SPINE?

Here's the cool bit. When any joint in your body does not move very well, a bunch of nerves that initiate pain get fired up (they're called *nociceptors* if you're interested), and a whole bunch of other nerve endings quiet down. These are loosely called *proprioceptors* and are the nerves that feed massive amounts of information to your brain telling it where your body is in space and what is happening to it. This information can be position sense,

temperature sense, pressure sense etc.

Have a think about how you've felt in the past when you've hurt a joint, say sprained an ankle, or jammed your thumb in a door. How did you feel? Nerve input to the brain fires up your adrenal system and you can be sweaty, feel nauseas, vomit, get abdominal pain, sinuses congest, breathing gets tight, heart rate goes up, skin gets clammy etc. Isn't this the same response as when you get frightened or angry? So this means if a joint gets injured or doesn't move well, the nerve signals it sends to your brain results in an increased activity of your nervous system in exactly the same way as when your get frightened or agitated.

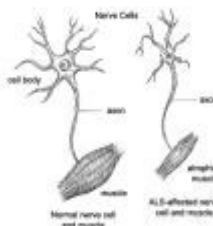
What is the typical reaction if you hurt yourself? You almost always squeeze the injury tight, rub it, or you might shake it. WHY? Because it stimulates the proprioceptors and this dampens down the pain signals. It's a natural response. Chiropractic has exactly the same effect for pain relief.



**Put simply, if we stimulate the joints and improve movement, we reduce the firing of nerves that cause pain.**

## HOW USEFUL IS PAIN AS A SYMPTOM? (FOR THAT MATTER IS ANY SYMPTOM USEFUL?)

With all the nerves in your body, it's been calculated that there are 3 trillion individual messages arriving at the sensory part of your brain every second. Guess how many of these are conscious signals, including the perception of pain? About 50. And of these maybe 10% at most are involved in pain. Consciously, you really have no idea what your body is up to. Can you imagine sorting though



that many messages every second? This means that using the conscious perception of pain to determine the need for chiropractic care is hugely inadequate and inaccurate. We would be relying on maybe 5/3 trillionths of information to know what to do with you.

I think the best way to think of symptoms is this—by the time you have them your body needs help. So do something about it. It's the self-protective nature of your brain saying 'Houston—you have a problem'

## IN PRACTICE THIS MEANS...

My main focus is on checking your spine for subluxations, and adjusting those joint to affect your nervous system in a positive way. It also means that I may also check and adjust any other joint in your body for exactly the same reason. An ankle joint that moves poorly can affect gait and therefore cause lower back problems. A clicking wrist can cause compensatory stress all the way up to the neck. So please make sure you talk about any problem you may be having, if it's not something I can help with, at least we can arrange appropriate alternative treatment

Ultimately the key is that I am taking a very proactive approach to your health and well being, perhaps unlike anything you've experienced before.

It is very fair to say that while other professions may provide spinal care, none of them have the approach and understanding of the 'whole' that makes chiropractic unique. It may not have been what you were expecting when you started at the clinic, and it isn't necessarily what all chiropractors offer. But I am committed to providing the best quality proactive health options that I can. While it may be challenging at times, I encourage you to have an open mind and be open to the possibilities.

