



THE VERTEBRAL SUBLUXATION Craig Osborne, Chiropractor © 2010

HOW COME YOU'VE NEVER HEARD OF SUBLUXATIONS

Like many conditions of the human body, we often never hear of diseases or problems unless they affect us directly.

You have more than 200 bones in your body. Whenever two bones come together at a joint, there can be movement. Since joints in your spine are close to the spinal cord and the nerve roots, too much or not enough joint motion can have serious effects.

If spinal joints (they're called facet joints) get 'stuck' and don't move right, they can irritate or chafe delicate nerves. If a joint moves too much, the bones can press against adjacent nerve tissue. It's been clearly demonstrated that pressure on a nerve will interfere with the nerve impulse that is passing over the nerve. Yet this pressure need only be as much as the pressure it takes to change the colour of your finger nail bed to white. These nerve messages are essential for a healthy body, so any interference will lower your body's ability to function correctly.

We call this problem the **vertebral subluxation complex**, or more simply a subluxation.

It's called a complex because it's not just bones and nerves involved. Muscles can become tense (or waste away in serious cases), discs, ligaments and tendons can become inflamed due to mechanical stresses. Over time bony spurs form and arthritic degeneration can accelerate.

SUBLUXATIONS ARE SERIOUS!

Many subluxations cause pain at the joint involved, and you may also get what is called 'referred pain'. This is when you have a dull or achy type pain in a different area of your body - your chiropractor is trained to identify the source of this. If there is pressure on the nerve root, then the pain is called 'radicular pain'. This also has a distinct pattern but is usually very sharp and stabbing in nature. True sciatic pain down the rear of the leg is a perfect example of this.

Most times when a person complains of a 'pinched nerve' they will actually be suffering from a symptomatic subluxation with referred pain.

However the most important aspect of a subluxation is its effect on your nervous system and therefore your health. Consider where the nerve at the level of the

subluxation is passing messages to. Does it supply your stomach, or your lungs, your leg muscles or perhaps your reproductive organs? If the messages to these organs are interfered with, might you get indigestion, or worsened asthma, weak muscles or perhaps menstrual cramps. Distorted communication between your brain and your body can cause all kinds of health problems beyond just headaches and backaches.

Your chiropractor is the only licensed health care profession dedicated to the detection, reduction and prevention of vertebral subluxations. In fact some doctors don't even realise that such a problem exists.

SO HOW DO YOU GET SUBLUXATED?

There are only a few categories of mechanisms causing subluxations.

- Stressful physical events eg car accidents, falls, sporting accidents
- Repetitive activities of daily living eg poor lifting, long hours at a PC, poor posture
- Chemical stress eg alcohol, drugs, pollution and poor diet
- Emotional stress eg anger, fear, work stress

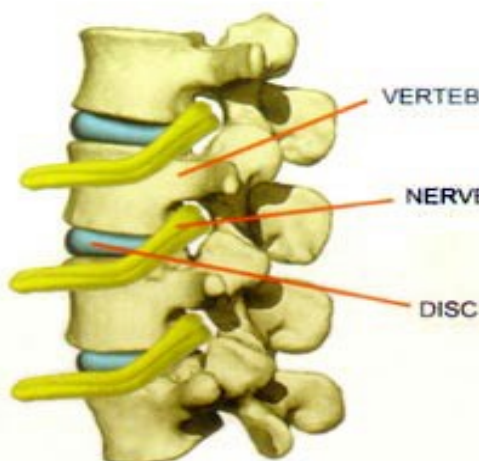
Life is never the result of a single event though so many times the problems may have many causes. It's important then to ensure that all are addressed.



HOW DO YOU KNOW IF YOU HAVE SUBLUXATIONS?

It's been calculated that 3 trillion nerve signals reach your brain every second, but we're only actually aware of about 50 of these. And pain is often the last thing to occur with a problem, and is often the first to

NORMAL



SUBLUXATION



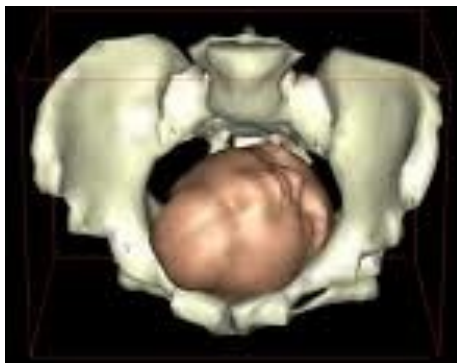
disappear. So by the time you're aware of a joint problem, it has probably been simmering under the surface for quite some time. So you can have subluxations but not even know it. Like tooth decay or cancer, subluxations can be present long before any warning signs appear. The results of a thorough chiropractic examination can identify the location and severity of any subluxations you may have.

CAN SUBLUXATIONS CLEAR UP ON THEIR OWN?

Sometimes. Our body has two main goals, reproduce, and stay alive. Subluxations stress the body and your body will attempt to correct them as it recognises the adverse affect on health. However our hectic lifestyles (and typically lack of balance in our lives) are a constant source of subluxations. Regular chiropractic tune-ups help identify these stubborn points and help your body on it's healthy path.

CAN CHILDREN GET SUBLUXATIONS?

ABSOLUTELY. Your first subluxation probably occurred during the birth process. There is significant stress especially on the neck during



birth (forceps births especially). Poor appetite, unexplained crying, colic and sleeplessness can be signs of subluxations in young children. It is also estimated that by the age of five, we have nearly 400 falls, many onto the head. Given these stresses, the best time to get checked is at birth! A child will typically not complain of an ache or pain repetitively, unless there really is a problem. Listen to these comments and help the child out. Techniques used for children are modified and are gentler than those used for adults. In babies the adjustment is often no more than gently applied

pressure.

If you know of someone with a child who has colic, recommend they try chiropractic as medications offered for colic do not work.

FOR ADOLESCENCE?

A growing body will often have aches and pains however persistent problems should be looked at. It's also during this time that a scoliosis may form. These curvature problems are serious conditions and should be managed carefully and from an early stage. In a small number of cases, scolioses progress to an extent that



the person's life expectancy is shortened. Have a look at the weight and type of school bag used by many children. Most are over-laden with text books, carried in poorly designed bags which pull the child's posture out of balance. There are chiropractic designed bags available.

I believe it's entirely valid that most back problems begin during our teenage years, when attention to aches and pains are often just passed off as growing pains. It's during these growth years that it's possible to get change. Once growing stops you're stuck with it.

AND AS I GET OLDER?

There are changes which occur as we age, but our good health is still reliant on the same factors as when we were young. So being checked for subluxations and adjusted regularly is still very important. From a treatment perspective the techniques used may be gentle especially if osteoporosis occurs. Yet age is no barrier to great results; I've had several patients in their 80's who have had dramatic improvement in their quality of life through chiropractic care.

WHY HAVEN'T I HEARD OF ALL THIS BEFORE?

Chiropractic is not new, its beginning is traced to 1895, about that time 'modern medicine'



was trading magic elixirs off the back of horse wagons. Both professions have come a long way in that time yet chiropractic has stayed true to its founding ideals of allowing the body to heal itself. Society on the other hand for much of the 20th century listened to others for guidance and often believed without questioning. Medicine grew to essentially prescribing drugs or removing offending body parts to reduce symptoms. As the only health profession trained to specifically identify movement problems with your spine we should be the specialist of choice for back and nerve related problems – a scourge of modern day life.



Unfortunately a large number of ill-informed people claim that chiropractic is unsafe, that we're quacks, that it's not supported by scientific studies, or simply form an opinion based on hearsay. For this reason I work hard to inform you on how chiropractic works, and trust that you will spread the word and encourage others to experience the benefits of drug free chiropractic care.