

A close-up photograph of two elderly women laughing heartily. The woman on the left is Black with braided hair, wearing a purple t-shirt. The woman on the right is white with short grey hair and glasses, wearing an orange zip-up jacket. They are both smiling broadly, showing their teeth. The background is a soft-focus outdoor setting with greenery.

# Chiropractic Care: A Natural Approach to Health at Every Stage of Life



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# 01 BEYOND BACK PAIN

**CHIROPRACTIC CARE HAS LONG BEEN RECOGNIZED IN PRIMARY HEALTHCARE AS AN EFFECTIVE OPTION THAT CAN NATURALLY ADDRESS BACK AND NECK PAIN.**

With recent concerns surrounding the opioid epidemic and the widespread abuse of painkillers, a natural approach to relieve back pain is more important than ever. According to a 2020 meta-analysis published in *Oxford Academic's Pain Medicine journal*, chiropractic patients demonstrated a 64% decrease in the odds of receiving an opioid compared to those that did not utilize chiropractic.<sup>1</sup>

What many consumers don't realize, however, is that doctors of chiropractic (DCs) can also provide care whose benefits reach well beyond back pain. From the needs of newborns experiencing rapid development to supporting the golden years and sustaining mobility, DCs offer targeted strategies in neuromusculoskeletal care that optimize joint function. In addition, DCs also provide consultation on other health topics like nutrition, exercise, posture and ergonomics so that patients of all ages can enjoy better health and well-being.

# CONCEPTION/ PREGNANCY

# 02

Chiropractors are uniquely positioned to offer safe, gentle strategies for women during child-bearing years. As stated by The American Pregnancy Association, 'Investing in the fertility and pregnancy wellness of women who are pregnant or trying to conceive is a routine matter for most chiropractors.'<sup>2</sup>

From studies in the *Journal of Manipulative Physiologic Therapeutics (JMPT)* and Obstetrics Gynecology respectively, it has been reported that nearly 50% of all pregnant women experience back pain during their pregnancy and up to 75% of women have back pain during labor.<sup>3</sup>

**FOR PREGNANT WOMEN, CHIROPRACTIC WORKS TO OPTIMIZE JOINT FUNCTION AND ITS EFFECT ON THE NEUROMUSCULOSKELETAL SYSTEM WHICH MAY RESULT IN:**

- **MAINTAINING A HEALTHIER PREGNANCY/POSTURE**
- **CONTROLLING SYMPTOMS OF NAUSEA**
- **REDUCING LABOR AND DELIVERY TIME**
- **RELIEF OF BACK, NECK OR JOINT PAIN**
- **PROMOTING AN UNCOMPLICATED DELIVERY<sup>4</sup>**

In addition to improving mobility, DCs can play a significant role as part of the prenatal care team by providing advice regarding proper nutrition, exercises during pregnancy, and positioning for sitting and sleeping to support the spine and pelvis. After the birth process, DCs strive to improve joint mobility to the mother's low back and pelvis and offer strategies for strengthening the soft tissues that were altered during pregnancy.





# 03 BABIES

**THE BIRTH PROCESS ITSELF CAN BE A STRESSFUL EVENT FOR BABIES. THEIR SMALL BODIES MUST RESPOND TO STRONG UTERINE CONTRACTIONS AND TRAVEL THROUGH THE BIRTH CANAL.**

In situations of breech birth, shortened or wrapped umbilical cord, an unnatural rotation or pulling on the head, surgery or the use of tools like forceps, the trauma can be compounded.

*The Journal of the American Osteopathic Association* featured a ground-breaking article by Dr. Viola Frymann in 1966 that helped the world recognize the problem. It stated that 90% of babies were born with some type of injury as a result of the birth process. Of those, 10% were born with profound injuries that could be readily observed even by an untrained eye. Only 10% of babies were born without any trauma.<sup>5</sup> These statistics imply that 80% of newborn babies have suffered some sort of insult that may not be easily recognized and go unattended.

Examining babies from cranium to pelvis and optimizing joint function can help facilitate the best possible start in life. With the nerve component involved in care, maximizing neuromusculoskeletal dynamics can often relieve other underlying issues in the process.

In a case series published in JMPT about chiropractic and the resolution of suboptimal breastfeeding, it was found that with chiropractic adjustments to involved joints all participants in the study (114 babies) showed improvement and 78% were able to exclusively breastfeed after 2-5 treatments in a 2-week time period.<sup>6</sup>

JMPT also published an observational study in 2019 that surveyed over 2,000 mothers from sixteen different chiropractic clinics in the United Kingdom. Mothers reported that chiropractic care for their infants was effective, safe and cost-effective with statistically significant improvements reported across many aspects of infant behavior including but not limited to: feeding problems, sleep issues, excessive crying, pain, issues with supine sleep position and restricted range of the motion in the neck.<sup>7</sup>



# CHILDREN

# 04

**AS BABIES GROW AND BECOME CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS A NUMBER OF EVENTS TAKE PLACE. RAPID GROWTH OF THE SKELETON, BRAIN DEVELOPMENT, FUSING OF THE CRANIAL BONES, HORMONAL CHANGES AND SO MUCH MORE.**



From toddlers to school-age, children are developing and increasingly engaged in a variety of activities that can affect the neuromusculoskeletal system. Learning to walk, growing pains, tumbles and falls, rough-housing/adventuring during play, heavy backpacks and school sports all can contribute to creating imbalance or inciting injury. These formative years of growth are also the peak time to watch for signs of scoliosis.

Technology has also become a primary contributor to neuromusculoskeletal issues in young people. Tech neck syndrome is becoming an emerging 21st-century issue. Bad posturing at computers and the formation of 'tech neck' (also known as text neck) due to leaning over cell phones for hours a day texting friends, playing games or watching videos is an issue of epidemic proportions in kids and teens.

A 2021 study published in the *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* reported that there has been a sudden shift in the prevalence of neck pain in the pediatric population. Text neck syndrome may also be linked to other developmental, medical, psychological and social complications.<sup>8</sup> This syndrome results in a straightening and forward lean of the cervical spine which can lead to pain, headaches, muscle spasm, a change in the natural curve of the spine, and ultimately a premature degeneration of the spinal joints and deformity.

Such changes all take a heavy toll. DCs understand the growing skeletal systems in children and can address spinal and extremity issues. Chiropractic care provides exams and adjustments to optimize joint function, exercises and techniques to maintain proper posture and advice about tech time limits and ergonomics as students adapt to balancing the use of technology. DCs can also provide advice for backpack safety, nutritional recommendations for growing bodies and offer professional screenings for the early detection of scoliosis.

# 05

## ATHLETES



**ACCORDING TO ONGOING STATISTICS, DCS CAN BE FOUND ON THE SIDELINES AS CRUCIAL MEMBERS OF THE MEDICAL STAFF FOR 90% OF PROFESSIONAL SPORTS ORGANIZATIONS INCLUDING MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL AND ALL OF THE TEAMS OF THE NHL AND NFL.<sup>10</sup>**

Chiropractors are also on staff as part of the United States Olympics staff and chiropractic care is routinely utilized by Olympic-class athletes around the world.

According to Tom Pappas (2x World Champion, 3x Olympian Team USA and 4x USA National Champion Decathlon), "Chiropractic care was the difference in bridging the gap between just being good and being great."

Long jumper Chantel Malone from the Virgin Islands (Pan American Games Gold Medalist, National Record Holder) stated, "As a jumper, chiropractic care is crucial making sure my body is aligned, my mobility/range of motion is optimal and muscles are firing correctly."

Chiropractic care was exceptionally impactful for Erica Witter-Davis after a leg injury during her Olympic career at the Sydney 2000 Games. Effective treatment and management of the injury by a DC allowed her to complete the competition. After retiring from professional sports she became Dr. Witter-Davis, a doctor of chiropractic, treating patients, optimizing health and saving the careers of fellow athletes.

Chiropractic care isn't only for professional athletes, however, it can benefit sports performance for people of all ages and abilities throughout life. Statistics from the National SAFE KIDS Campaign and the American Academy of Pediatrics estimate that more than 3.5 million children and teens in sports are injured annually in the U.S. alone.

Whether in sports arenas, on a school team or at a park near home, chiropractic care can aid athletes in treating and recovering from injuries. DCs also go beyond pain care and recovery as they work to focus on prevention and help participants remain injury free. By adjusting the joints to optimize function, and providing strategies to improve balance, stability and flexibility, DCs also provide a competitive edge as they strive to improve the overall performance and resilience for sports competitors at every level.



## 06 MIDDLE ADULTHOOD

**FOR THOSE APPROACHING MIDDLE AGE, ACHES AND PAINS MAY INCREASE AND OTHER SETS OF CONCERNS MAY BECOME MORE PREVALENT SUCH AS BONE HEALTH (ESPECIALLY IN MENOPAUSAL WOMEN), ARTHRITIS, WEIGHT GAIN AND CHRONIC DISEASE PROCESSES.**

Doctors of chiropractic (DCs) are a crucial part of your health team to provide maximum function in the joints. DCs also work to detect possible health issues through the recommendation of imaging studies and lab work and aid in lifestyle choices that will help upshift nutrition, regulate weight and decrease the risk of chronic disease. Maintaining a healthy skeletal structure shouldn't be an afterthought. It is clear that prevention is the key to combating bone fragility; starting habits earlier in life that support future bone health is the best strategy for prevention and maintenance. With the silent progression that osteoporosis is known for, and the lack of a cure, we want to intervene before bones become porous.

In addition to neuromusculoskeletal care, your doctor of chiropractic can help you analyze your specific risk factors and the possible need for a bone screening study. Your DC can recommend nutritional foods and supplements targeted to support the metabolic needs of your bones, as well as help you devise a plan of specific weight-bearing exercise to help maintain strong bone health over time.

# 07

## GOLDEN YEARS



**AS OUR BODIES AGE WE FIND THAT JOINTS STIFFEN AND BALANCE NATURALLY DECLINES. THESE FACTORS INCREASE THE RISK OF FALLING AND MAKE THE POSSIBILITY OF SUFFERING AN INJURY MORE COMMON.**

Older adults are also particularly vulnerable to back pain.<sup>13</sup> A 2016 study in the journal *Clinical Interventions in Aging* back listed pain as one of the top two reasons that older Americans visit a doctor's office, second only to cough.<sup>14</sup>

Chiropractic care to maintain optimum flexibility and mobility in the joints provides greater stability and natural relief from chronic pain, reducing the need and expense for seniors to take painkillers and significantly reducing the risk of potentially dangerous side effects.

*The American Journal of Managed Care* published a 2019 study stating that "Chiropractic care is a Medicare-reimbursed service that can be accessed without medical referral and provides a sizeable amount of the nation's spine care." It concluded that "...among older adults who have a spine condition, access to chiropractic care may reduce medical spending".<sup>15</sup> A similar result was found in an observational study published in the *Journal of Manipulative and Physiological Therapeutics* that concluded that older patients who only utilized chiropractic care during low back pain episodes had lower overall costs of care, shorter episodes, and a lower cost of care per episode than patients in other treatment groups.<sup>16</sup>

In addition to offering cost savings, and striving to reduce the need for drugs or surgery, DCs continue to increase in popularity with older adults as they utilize gentle low impact techniques that are safe and effective to maximize joint function. DCs also can provide recommendations for nutritional foods and supplements targeted to support the metabolic needs of older bones, offer solutions for tight muscles, as well as help you devise a plan of specific weight bearing exercise to help maintain strong bone health and enhance balance and stability to reduce fall risk.





# 08 A NATURAL APPROACH

Doctors of chiropractic receive a minimum of 4,200 hours of classroom, laboratory and clinical internship followed by national board exams, state licensure exams and continuing education focusing specifically on a drug-free hands-on approach to healthcare that includes patient assessment, ordering special studies, diagnosis, management and referral or co-management when indicated.

**DCS ARE PRIMARY CARE NEUROMUSCULOSKELETAL SPECIALISTS WITH EXTENSIVE DIAGNOSTIC SKILLS AND ARE ALSO WELL-TRAINED TO:**

- **ANALYZE AND ADJUST TO OPTIMIZE THE JOINTS OF THE SPINE AND EXTREMITIES**
- **RECOMMEND THERAPEUTIC AND REHABILITATIVE EXERCISES**
- **RECOMMEND OR APPLY A WIDE-RANGE OF SOFT TISSUE MOBILIZATION TECHNIQUES**
- **RECOMMEND OR APPLY PHYSICAL MODALITIES SUCH AS HEAT, LASER, ULTRASOUND, ELECTROTHERAPIES, TRACTION**
- **PROVIDE NUTRITIONAL, ERGONOMIC AND LIFESTYLE COUNSELING**

DCs develop a comprehensive care plan tailored for each individual patient and offer a safe gentle approach to optimize health at every stage of life...naturally.



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