

Vienna Chiropractic Associates, P.C.

Your Down-to-Earth Alternative Since 1983

September–December 2007



Pain Relief: The Digestion Connection

Doctors of chiropractic have helped millions of people obtain relief from back pain, neck pain, tension headaches and other painful symptoms related to the spine. What most people don't know is that chiropractic care may confer other health benefits as well. The reason for this has to do with the basic structure of the nervous system.

Nerves from many regions of the spine have a definite digestion connection. These spinal nerves are capable of speeding up or slowing down the passage of food through the gastrointestinal tract, increasing or decreasing the amount of digestive juices secreted into the tract, and sending a greater or lesser supply of blood to various digestive organs. The consequences of disturbing these spinal nerves are not necessarily limited to spinal pain, but can potentially involve any function affected by those nerves, including digestion.

An Australian survey of 1,494 chiropractic patients revealed that spinal pain is often accompanied by heartburn or indigestion. The majority of these patients never told their doctors of chiropractic about their stomach symptoms, only their spinal pain, which was usually located between the shoulder blades. Of the patients with indigestion or heartburn, 22% reported relief from their digestive symptoms as well as their spinal pain while under chiropractic care.

Other studies have linked low back pain to constipation or diarrhea. Correction of misalignment or restriction

(subluxation) in the lumbar spine or pelvis was followed by relief of both the low back pain and the bowel problems.

Unfortunately, many people with back pain, neck pain, tension headache and other types of spinal pain turn to pain-killing drugs before trying chiropractic care. This decision may be detrimental to digestive health (especially when

combined with the “gastronomic challenges” of the Fall-Winter feast and party season!). For example, estimates published in a medically-sponsored website state that some 16,500 Americans die each year from gastrointestinal bleeding due to the use of non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs). (Visit

(Continued on page 2)

Office Hours

Mon.	10:30 am–1:00 pm; 3:00 pm–7:30 pm	Fri.	8:30 am–1:00 pm; 3:00–6:30 pm
Tues.	3:00 pm–7:30 pm	Sat.	9:00 am–1:00 pm (We are usually open at least two Saturdays/month)
Wed.	10:30 am–1:00 pm; 3:00 pm–7:30 pm	Sun.	Office Closed
Thurs.	Office Closed		

Please call us at 703-938-6441. If we are closed or away from the desk, you will be able to leave a message. If you are having trouble reaching us by cell phone from certain areas (including parts of Vienna), keep trying. Visit our website: www.neurologicalfitness.com.

Office Calendar

September

3 Closed for Labor day
8, 15 Open for Sat. hours
17 Chiropractic Ind. Day

October

6, 13 Open for Sat. hours
15 Chiropractic Ind. Day
19-20 Office Closed: We are presenting a seminar in Winnipeg, Canada. The office will be open **Thursday, October 18** from 3:00-6:00 pm.)

November

3, 10, 17, 24 .. Open for Sat. hours
19 Chiropractic Ind. Day
22, 23 Closed, Thanksgiving

December

1, 8, 15, 22 Open for Sat. hours
17 Chiropractic Ind. Day
24-30; 1/1 Closed, Winter holiday
31 Open: 10:30 am–1 pm

January

2 Return to Regular Hours
5, 12, 26 Open for Sat. Hours
21 Chiropractic Ind. Day

Note: We are making every effort to provide you with an accurate calendar. However, each newsletter covers a period of four months. Unforeseen circumstances during this time period may require minor changes in the calendar.

(Continued from page 1)

www.gastro.org. Click on to “Patient Center,” then go to “Reduce Your Risk: Helping You Understand the Risk of Pain Relievers”) This category of drugs includes several commonly taken for spinal pain, such as aspirin, Advil®, Aleve®, Motrin®, and Naprosyn®. Tylenol® is not an NSAID, and is not believed to be responsible for significant amounts of gastrointestinal bleeding, but it had been

linked to another digestive problem—liver damage.

While research evidence linking chiropractic care to improved digestive health is not yet conclusive, compare it to the drug approach. There is compelling evidence that the medications many people use instead of chiropractic care are hazardous to digestive health. No

painkilling drug can match the safety record of chiropractic care. Is it reasonable to make painkilling drugs your first line or defense against spinal pain? Or is it more intelligent to consider an approach that says, “Chiropractic first, drugs second, surgery last?” ❖

(References and other information on this topic are available on request.)

My Feet Hurt

Our poor feet... pounded on all day with all our body's weight, crammed into shoes most of which bear no resemblance whatsoever to the shape of the human foot. When your feet hurt, it's hard to even think, let alone act.

Feet are extremely complicated anatomically, built of a number of chunky, small bones and an intricate network of muscles, nerves, ligaments, blood vessels, and lymphatic vessels. These can all, if traumatized, shift and cramp, causing pain. While there are many problems locally in a foot that are related to conditions such as diabetes that can cause foot pain or numbness, foot pain also frequently comes from aberrant information reaching the foot from sensory (feeling) and motor (movement) nerves originating in the low back. The rest of the spine can also get into the act if there is a balance or postural problem that forces the feet to constantly struggle to provide a stable foundation for the rest of you. We'd like to offer a few tips to help keep your feet healthy, correctly functioning and feeling good.

A. Wear shoes that fit! Were you expecting something more cerebral? If your shoes are too narrow, short or high, your weight cannot be distributed correctly. This, in turn, will affect your gait as much as your sense of balance and well being, as well as throwing your hips and spine out of kilter. If the heel is too high, you are tilting your pelvis forward and stressing your low back, including your discs.

B. If you have wounds on your feet that don't heal, notice discoloration or increasing/persistent numbness, or if one foot is consistently colder/hotter than the other, it's time to see a good podiatrist. Any of the above can indicate medical problems that should be seen ASAP.

C. We're hearing a lot of diagnoses of plantar fasciitis. This is an inflammation of a layer of soft tissue on the bottom of your foot, and it can come from a variety of causes, some medical, and some chiropractic, with a few fashion statements thrown in. If you've seen a health care practitioner of any kind, or changed shoes and still are not quite getting rid of the problem, look into a few other possibilities. Most persistent health problems are multicausal, and continued foot pain is not just a nuisance, it is a potential health problem.

D. Get a chiropractic exam. If your back, particularly your lower spine and sacroiliac joints, is not moving correctly and is causing nerves to misfire, your feet can end up being the unhappy beneficiaries of the interference. For instance, the sciatic nerve, the largest nerve in your body, comes from the low back, extends down the back of your thighs, and sends fibers all the way to the soles of your feet. Other nerves can fail the muscles they are designed to control, allowing them, in turn, to become unstable and further aggravate sensory nerves, causing numbness, pain and tingling.

The good news is, if the problem is coming from the low back, we can probably help. ❖

What's That Shiny Pin For?

Lately, you may have seen Dr. Masarsky wearing a shiny pin to work. It represents his induction earlier this year as a Distinguished Fellow of the International Chiropractors Association. ❖

Airplane Clavicle

Whether plane seats are really getting smaller or people are just getting bigger is pretty much immaterial. In airplane seats, as in so much of life, one size does not fit all, not even a little bit. We're used to seeing people show up hunched and scrunched after a long flight in a small, oddly designed seat. Now we're seeing a frequent new problem, compressed collarbones and shoulders, affectionately known as “airplane clavicle.”

It seems that, for whatever reason, air travel is not bringing out the best in some of our fellow passengers. Unless you are lucky enough to be sitting two across in a three seat row, you will probably find yourself participating in “the arm rest race,” as well as the “you are likely a great person, but this is way too cuddly” competition for shoulder and leg space.

Again, for whatever reason, we often find ourselves next to someone who holds the firm conviction that they are the chief occupant of the row, and the

(Continued on page 3)

(Continued from page 2)

other passengers are being allowed to use whatever space they don't want. Besides being a good excuse to gripe, why is this important? Because the seating behavior of the "alpha," besides being rude, actually detracts from your health.

When you're being crammed into the window or pushed into the aisle like a speed bump for the attendants, or if you really picked the lucky number and find yourself in the middle seat, being compressed by a pair of "seat dominators," you can't breathe properly, let alone work, eat or read. Your shoulders can lock up from long-term cramming, your traps and neck will go cubist on you, and clavicles (collar-bones) can get jammed up, down, inward or outward, not allowing the rest of you to go back to normal. Breathing deeply or correcting your posture becomes all but impossible. What can you do?

- A. Let us help you make sure your clavicles and shoulder girdles in general are moving as properly and freely as they can. It takes only a moment to make this part of your pre-flight visit.
- B. Combine breathing exercises, especially Hara or t'an t'ien breathing with lying in "anatomical position." This involves lying on your back with your arms loosely at your sides, palms out, to open the chest and allow you to fill your lungs and support diaphragm movement. Do this a day or two before your trip and as soon as you check into your room. It only takes a few moments and will help decompress you. We'll be happy to run you through this exercise.
- C. On the plane, if the would-be "alpha" seems determined to rule the row, look around for an empty seat with polite seatmates and ask the attendant to move you there.
- D. When you get home, do the "anatomical position" exercise again. If anything feels "stuck," you can't straighten up, or you can't draw as deep a breath as you are used to (love that oxygen!), it's probably time for an adjustment. ❖

Be There for Our Veterans

Whatever your position on the current war, we're sure you'll agree that our men and women in uniform deserve the best support we can give them. Many of them are coming home to us in bad shape, and they are being hospitalized far from their families.

From the time this newsletter is released until November 11 (Veterans' Day), we will be accepting contributions for Sew Much Comfort. This group supports our wounded troops far from home by supplying clothing individually fitted to accommodate prosthetic limbs, braces, monitors, and other medical equipment. Many of these returned troops face extended hospital stays with nothing to wear but their hospital gowns. By providing them with this specialized clothing, Sew Much Comfort is also providing something intangible but incredibly important—dignity. Sew Much Comfort is the recipient of the 2006 Newman's Own Award.

There will be a container at the front desk to receive your help. If you would prefer to give privately, send your tax-deductible contribution to: Michele Cuppy, c/o Sew Much Comfort, 13805 Frontier Lane, Burnsville, MN 55337. If you are interested in volunteering your sewing skills, or if you simply want more information, log on to www.sewmuchcomfort.org.—Thank you. ❖

The Body As Instrument

Do you sing? Sell? Run meetings? Then you know how important your voice can be to your success.

Good posture is critical to your voice. It's what allows us to project, portray mood or authority, and to breathe while doing so.

Those of you who spend professional time on the phone know that you usually sound better if you stand while speaking. Standing allows you to pick up your head, hold your shoulders wide open and expand your diaphragm and throat muscles to their fullest. Spending hours sitting at a

desk can compress your body, forcing you to lean forward and compress all of the above. If you injure your neck or thoracic (mid-back) vertebrae or ribs in an auto accident, even a mild one, your neck and throat muscles may be traumatized and interfere with your achieving appropriate personal posture.

Keeping your spine functioning properly will not only allow you to maintain good body mechanics but it will also help eliminate disruptive stresses on the nerves to the throat, diaphragm and intercostal (between the ribs) muscles that help you get out that sound the way you want to. ❖

Refer A Friend, Save A Tree

We'd like to thank all of you who participated in the above program. A check has been sent to the Fairfax County Urban Forestry Department in support of its public-private partnership to plant trees throughout the county. The plantings are designed to conserve air, water and soil quality. Thanks for acting locally; the globe appreciates it, we're sure. ❖

We've Always Been Green!

Chiropractic, especially as we practice it at this office, is about as environmentally friendly as you can get. Our non-toxic form of health care does not add pharmaceutical pollution to our water supply, and does not release antibiotic-resistant "super-bugs" to the environment. Our clinical approach minimizes the use of x-ray to avoid unnecessary exposure to radiation. We do not make electrically powered therapies our central focus, which helps conserve energy. Our tools to help you toward wellness are primarily hands-on adjusting and self-care advice.

For an example of "green" advice for spinal self-care, please refer to the article, "Spine-Friendly Driving" in our

(Continued on page 4)

(Continued from page 3)

September-October 2006 newsletter. Please ask for a paper copy only if you don't have Internet access. ❖

What Is Chiropractic Independence Day?

In an effort to make chiropractic care affordable to everyone, we set aside selected Mondays as Chiropractic Independence Days. On Independence Days, there are no set fees. Your decision to seek chiropractic care is independent of your insurance or income level. Payment (which goes anonymously into a box at the front counter) is a combination of what you feel the care is worth and your ability to pay. We do accept new patients on Inde-

pendence Day, depending on time availability, making this an excellent time to introduce a friend, co-worker, or loved one to chiropractic care. It does make sense to make your appointment well in advance, as these time slots fill in quickly. ❖

Multipacks

If you want to have your spine checked regularly on an early intervention basis, you may be interested in our six- or twelve-visit packs, or the eighteen-visit family pack. You will save money while safeguarding your spinal health and mobility. Our staff is happy to answer your questions on these programs. ❖

Thanks For Your Referrals

We'd like to thank those of you who have been referring family, friends and co-workers. For a health care provider, referral is the sincerest form of flattery.

If your friend or relative is curious to quietly observe as you get adjusted, that's okay with us as long as it's okay with you. If this is inconvenient, our DVD may satisfy their curiosity; it features Dr. Masarsky doing an actual adjustment on the air. In the meantime, consider sharing this newsletter, or letting them know about our website. ❖

© 2007: Drs. Marion Todres and Charles Masarsky, Chiropractors

News

Vienna Chiropractic Associates, P.C.
421-B Church Street, NE
Vienna, VA 22180

Address Correction Requested

