

OPTIMAL HEALTH UNIVERSITY™

Presented by Dr. Joseph Baker

Chiropractic: Leader of the Wellness Revolution

These days it seems that everybody is talking about “wellness.” People are questioning our society’s dependence on medication and medical procedures with potentially harmful side effects. We are searching for a better way, which often means opening our minds to what was formerly considered “alternative.” In fact, many “alternative” approaches to health — from dietary supplements to yoga — have become mainstream. Individuals are making radical changes in the pursuit of optimal health — and maintaining it well into old age.

Dr. Baker is thrilled to be a holistic practitioner during this transformational time in the history of health care. Chiropractic was instrumental in fueling the Wellness Revolution, and it continues to serve as a driving force behind it.



Chiropractic Principles Fuel the Wellness Revolution

The modern Wellness Revolution has been buttressed by the principles of chiropractic, which the founders of the profession established over a century ago. These principles include:

1. The body has a built-in healing force or “intelligence” that strives toward balance.
2. The body functions as a whole, not as a collection of isolated parts.
3. The spine and nervous system play a key role in health.
4. Physical, emotional and chemical (including environmental) factors all affect health.
5. Unnecessary medication and medical procedures should be avoided.

Dr. Baker wants patients to understand how the pillars of chiropractic have shaped what we today call wellness. Grasping these principles gives chiropractic patients a significant edge when it comes to getting and staying

healthy.

The Body Can Heal Itself

A fundamental tenet of chiropractic is that the body has the power to heal itself. The founders of chiropractic termed this ability *innate intelligence*. It is also referred to as innate wisdom, innate energy healing force, healing energy, life force and many other terms.

Unfortunately, factors, such as environmental toxins, unnecessary medication, lack of exercise, stress and poor diets, interfere with this healing ability. Removing these negative influences is the key to wellness.

This concept may sound “far out.” However, scientific research proves that it is a reality. For instance, studies reveal that it is not uncommon for the body to reverse the development of cancer on its own by killing off pre-cancerous cells (*Obstetrics & Gynecology* 2005;106:115-20). Another example of the body’s own healing force in action is the reversal of conditions, such as heart disease and diabetes, when negative influences that interfere with the body’s healing ability

(such as poor diet and lack of exercise) are removed. Have you ever observed a skin scrape heal without treatment, other than keeping it clean? That’s another simple example of innate intelligence at work.

Scientists have their own term for this healing force: *homeostasis*. Webster’s dictionary defines homeostasis as “a relatively stable state of equilibrium or a tendency toward such a state between the different but interdependent elements or groups of elements of an organism, population, or group.” In a nutshell, as it relates to individuals, homeostasis is the underlying power that maintains balance among the various systems of the body.

It’s All Connected

The concept of innate intelligence or homeostasis goes hand in hand with a second principle of chiropractic: The body functions as a unit, not as a collection of isolated parts. This is why chiropractors are considered “holistic” health-care providers.

Doctors of chiropractic teach patients that dysfunction in one area of the body may affect other parts of the body, and the body as a whole.

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Look to the Spine

Chiropractic was founded on the innovative notion that health care will evolve to focus on the spine and nervous system.

Throughout human history, forward-thinkers have predicted this shift. For instance, Hippocrates, “the father of modern medicine,” taught that spinal manipulation was a vital part of healing. In fact, Hippocrates wrote two textbooks on the subject: *Manipulation and Importance of Good Health* and *Setting Joints by Leverage*.

Thomas A. Edison wrote that “the doctor of the future will give no medicines, but will interest his patients in the care of the human frame, in diet and in the cause and prevention of disease.”

Why is the spine so important? The spinal cord is a major component of the nervous system. It is housed in the protective shell of the spinal column. The spinal column consists of bones called *vertebrae* that are stacked one on top of the other and separated by flexible discs.

Nerves flowing to organs, muscles and structures throughout the body emerge from and return to the spinal cord. These nerves enter and exit through small canals between spinal bones. And, hot-off-the-press research now reveals that some spinal nerves actually attach directly to vertebrae via miniscule ligaments (*Spine* 2005;30:601-5).

Doctors of chiropractic theorize that subtle alterations in the spine and surrounding structures may interfere with nervous system activity. These dysfunctional segments are termed *vertebral subluxations*.

Research links vertebral subluxations with a litany of disorders — from Parkinson’s disease and infertility to headaches and carpal tunnel syndrome. Investigators reason that inhibited nervous system function due to vertebral subluxations may be the connection between the spine and such a vast array of health challenges. After all, the nervous system helps regulate all body functions.

Many Factors Affect Health

The Wellness Revolution includes a growing acceptance of the connection between the mind, body and spirit. However, this concept isn’t new to chiropractic. It was integral in the development of the profession over a century ago.

The founders of chiropractic taught that vertebral subluxations — and in turn all health challenges — are due not just to physical causes, but to chemical and emotional influences as well.

Physical causes:

- Physical trauma
- Improper ergonomics
- Lack of hydration
- Insufficient exercise
- Repetitive activities
- Lack of sleep

Chemical causes:

- Medication
- Environmental toxins
- Pesticides and herbicides
- Illicit drugs
- Excessive alcohol intake
- “Junk” foods

Emotional causes:

- A high-stress lifestyle
- Dearth of social interaction
- Lack of spiritual connection
- Paucity of relationships
- Pessimistic outlook
- Holding grudges

Avoid Unnecessary Medication

Another crucial principle of chiropractic is the avoidance of unnecessary medication and medical procedures. Chiropractors know that if the obstacles to wellness are removed, so is the reliance on medication.

Recent reports about the harmful effects of unnecessary medication have convinced even the most skeptical of individuals to consider alternatives. In the past few years alone, we have learned that:

Antidepressant medication in children does more psychological harm than

good (*J Child Adolesc Psychopharmacol* 2003;13:143-52).

Cox-inhibiting painkillers cause cardiovascular disease (*The Lancet* 2004;364:1995).

Medication for attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) has long-term effects on the brains of children, possibly setting them up for anxiety disorders when they reach adulthood (*Biol Psychiatry* 2003;54:1317-29).

Antibiotic use dramatically boosts the risk of developing breast cancer (*JAMA* 2004;291:827-35).

Antibiotic use elevates the likelihood of suffering allergies and asthma (*Pulse* 2002:42).

Regular use of painkillers for headache actually provokes more headaches to occur (*Headache* 1996;36:14).

Hormone replacement therapy dramatically ups a woman’s risk of cardiovascular disease and cancer (*CMAJ* 2002;167:377-8).

And that’s just a sampling of research warning of the possible risk factors of medication. It’s no wonder that people are seeking alternatives.

Go Back to Basics

This office encourages patients and members of the community who desire wellness to go back to basics. Wellness begins with knowledge. It is this knowledge that sustains action. Before developing a winning wellness plan, reflect on the pillars that support the Wellness Revolution by familiarizing yourself with the principles of chiropractic.

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