

OPTIMAL HEALTH UNIVERSITY™

Presented by Team Chiropractic GTA

How to Raise Healthy Children

In today's frantic world, raising healthy children is more challenging than ever before. Fortunately, your doctor at Team Chiropractic GTA Centre can help by showing parents how to ensure their youngsters develop lifelong wellness habits.

The secret to raising healthy children, according to your doctor at Team Chiropractic GTA Centre, is to help them establish a balanced life that includes proper nutrition, exercise, positive friendships and chiropractic care.

Chiropractic Is for Kids Too!

Spinal problems don't just affect adults — an escalating number of children suffer as well. The good news? Research shows that chiropractic care may effectively alleviate this disorder in youngsters.

Just like adults, children often endure a condition known as *vertebral subluxation*, characterized by areas in the spine where movement is restricted or bones (vertebrae) are slightly out of alignment. These dysfunctional areas are linked to back and neck pain — as well as a myriad of other health concerns, such as headaches, asthma, carpal tunnel syndrome, infantile colic and ear infections.

Doctors of chiropractic use gentle maneuvers called *chiropractic adjustments* to correct vertebral subluxations. Are chiropractic adjust-



ments safe for children? ABSOLUTELY! Your doctor at Team Chiropractic GTA Centre tailors the chiropractic adjustment to match the size of a child's vertebrae, adapting the technique for each patient. Pediatric adjustments require extremely low force and have been proven safe and effective by scientific research.

In a recent experiment — the results of which were just made public — investigators studied 54 patients aged four through 18 years with low-back pain (LBP). Forty-seven percent of the youngsters had pain attributed to a traumatic event, which was most commonly related to sports. All of the patients received chiropractic adjustments.

After just six weeks of care, the subjects showed 62 percent improvement (*JMPT* 2003;26:1-8).

Studies reveal that chiropractic care also alleviates pediatric asthma. Investigators evaluated 36 asthmatic children for 12 weeks. One group received chiropractic adjustments, while a control cohort underwent placebo treatments. The chiropractic group enjoyed a 39 percent drop in asthma-severity ratings, a 20 percent decline in bronchodilator use and a 10 to 28 percent boost in quality of life (*JMPT* 2001;24:369-77).



Avoid Unnecessary Medication

Doctors of chiropractic are exceedingly concerned about the overuse and misuse of medications in children. Your doctor at Team Chiropractic GTA Centre knows that drugs are often short-term fixes to long-term problems — and are frequently accompanied by a litany of side effects.

For example, even seemingly benign over-the-counter (OTC) painkillers can cause serious health problems, such as gastrointestinal bleeding and hypertension. Ironically, heavy use of OTC drugs may also cause rebound headaches — inciting the very problem they were designed to cover up.

Instead of masking symptoms, doctors of chiropractic, such as your doctor at Team Chiropractic GTA Centre, concentrate on holistic strategies for pain and disease prevention.

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Rather than recommending potentially harmful drugs, chiropractors concentrate on all-natural solutions. Studies show that chiropractic care is often more helpful for long-term problems, such as chronic headaches, than painkillers (*J Child Neur* 2001;16:448-9).

Start out Right

Obesity is linked with a multitude of health concerns, such as heart disease, diabetes, infertility, cancer and high blood pressure. New research has linked early weight gain to subsequent obesity in childhood and adolescence.

Teaching children to make superior food choices early on promotes a lifetime of healthy eating habits. Of course, youngsters need to know *why* nutrition is fundamental.

Help your kids stay well by selecting foods that pack a powerful nutritional punch. Start by eliminating “junk foods” — such as cookies, chips and crackers — from the cupboards. Replace fatty snacks with low-cal alternatives, such as sliced apples or celery sticks topped with organic almond butter. Avoid foods containing “white” flours, refined sugars and chemical additives. Opt instead for whole foods, such as whole grain cereals and bread. Stock the frig with fresh veggies and fruits, which are loaded with brain-enriching nutrients and antioxidants.

Most importantly, mirror excellent eating habits. Actions really do speak louder than words — what kids watch you eat may be more important than a food “lecture.” One six-year study, which examined 2,913 children ranging in age from infancy to eight years old, found that a mother’s weight was the most significant predictor of childhood obesity (*Pediatrics* 1999;103:85). Other reports reveal that parents are a stronger influence on eating habits than peers.

Stress Solutions

Let’s face it: Life today is stressful for adults *and* children. Just as adults use coping strategies to manage anxi-

ety, kids need stress-busting strategies. Children tend to internalize stress rather than express it. Getting them to talk about what’s going on is an important step towards eliminating tension and anxiety. Initially, your youngster may shy away from vocalizing his or her thoughts. But, with practice, any child can become a verbalizing pro. In addition, ensure that your little ones engage in stress-relieving activities, such as cardiovascular exercise, yoga, meditation, prayer and breathing exercises — or hobbies, such as drawing or writing.



Talk about Health

How much health counseling do children receive from their primary-care providers before their 18th birthday? Not much, according to a study of 362 college freshman. Students answered questions regarding 15 health topics, including stress, smoking, heart disease and nutrition.

More than 75 percent of the volunteers reported receiving no counseling for 11 of the 15 issues. Most students had questions about exercise, stress, depression, weight control and sexually transmitted diseases. The report found that the adolescents particularly lacked counseling on topics related to living a long life (*Pediatrics* 1998;82:481-5).

The lack of public health education makes talking to kids about wellness a vital responsibility for parents: conversation that should be on-going, not an isolated event.

Lemonade from Lemons

A positive, optimistic attitude profoundly impacts well-being. Studies show that approaching challenges with an upbeat outlook can help the body stay healthy (*Mayo Clin Proc* 2000;75:140-3). Teaching children to perceive difficulties as opportunities for growth — not roadblocks — will help them minimize depression and boost wellness.

Also, associating with positive people can dramatically affect health. Encourage youngsters to steer clear of destructive, “toxic” relationships and seek out affirming social interactions.

Exercise

Exercise has numerous long-term health and psychological benefits for children and adults. Physical activity promotes longevity by strengthening the immune system and warding off serious illnesses, such as cardiovascular disease and cancer.

And here’s more good news: Studies show that starting an exercise regimen in childhood may encourage a lifetime of fitness. One report compared then-current fitness test scores of 453 men, aged 23 to 25 years, to their childhood scores from ages 10 to 11 and 15 to 18. The report found that “physically active adults had significantly better childhood physical fitness test scores than did the inactive adults.” (*Pediatrics* 1998;82:324-30.)

Teach Wellness

Developing winning health habits at a young age sets the stage for a lifetime of disease-fighting, proactive choices. Schedule an appointment with your chiropractor today to learn more about raising healthy kids! Also, ask about upcoming seminars and workshops on the subject.

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