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Too Many Chiropractic Visits?

“How many Chiropractors does it take to change a light bulb?” Answer: “Just one, but it takes 56 visits!” This joke describes the misconception that once you go to a Chiropractor for spinal manipulations you have to keep receiving them for the rest of your life. Manipulations, although safest to be rendered by a licensed chiropractor or chiropractic neurologist, combined with spinal decompression and physical therapy, are some of the best methods of treating headache, neck and low back pain, too many manipulations may loosen and destabilize spinal bones. However, there are some people who swear by chiropractic and insist that they need ‘adjustments’ on a regular basis.

Chiropractic Neurologists do not manipulate the spinal as often as regular chiropractors because we emphasize massage, exercise, stretching and therapies that reintegrate the nervous system, consultations concerning stress and daily activities. At the appropriate time, I demonstrate exercise and stretching techniques specific to your needs in the rehabilitation area of the office. To my knowledge, no studies have shown that manipulations, once a month or more, are harmful. I do not believe in interfering with the body’s natural ability to heal itself. Just as dependencies on unnecessary drugs and surgeries should be avoided, patients should not become dependent on frequent manipulations- no more than 6 per year to the same spinal bone. Spinal manipulation is an important, but small part of a chiropractic neurologist’s treatment capabilities. It should be employed as infrequently as possible.

Recent studies revealed a minority population that does not have the ability to produce a sufficient supply of natural pain-killing hormones: endorphins and enkephalin. These individuals, who, for example, avoid exercise and physical exertion because they make them ‘hurt’, suffer more than most when mild injuries are inflicted. Since spinal manipulation is the most effective method of producing these natural chemicals (which appear in the spinal cord) it is therefore necessary for some to continue with care on a regular basis. They should not receive frequent adjustments, but a variety of the many treatments chiropractic neurologists perform.

Others suffer traumatic injuries and need to return regularly because they have permanent joint, muscle, ligament or nerve damage. Their pain satisfactorily diminishes after a few initial visits but gradually returns and may develop into chronic pain syndrome. The benefits of chiropractic care for these syndromes have been well documented.

Regardless of the reason for your prolonged discomfort, chiropractic neurological treatment offers one of the best ways to control pain.

Home Therapies That Work

Should the pain continue, after these preliminary steps have been employed, effective home techniques should be implemented. For example, supportive wraps on the neck, wrists, elbows, the low back, knees and ankles add stability, act as a constant reminder that injury has occurred and retain the body's warmth.

Products like Ben-Gay, Tiger Balm, and Chiropractic Mineral Ice (actually invented by a chiropractor) use various topical analgesics like benzocaine and natural substances like menthol, eucalyptus and camphor for warming. The analgesics penetrate the skin to decrease pain. The natural ingredients warm the skin which enhances blood flow to the underlying injury and speed recovery. They penetrate better if applied before the supportive wrap, the best of which is made of neoprene (a black 'rubbery' material used in wet-suits worn by surfers and drivers) and before activity.

Cold applied to a painful area after injury may prevent swelling and control pain. Gel ice packs remain soft when taken from the freezer and are more comfortable than a bag of crushed ice or frozen peas, because they contour to the effected body part and apply cold evenly.

I believe that our bodies should be pain-free whether we produce a limited supply of natural pain regulators or suffer from chronic pain syndrome. We should have access to as many methods to control pain naturally as possible; hence, that's why I chose to practice chiropractic neurology.

Besides, at a rate of 6 manipulations per year, it would take 9 years before anyone could accuse us of being Chiropractic Fanatics!!!

In Health,

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