

FAMILY WELLNESS FIRST

Adjusting to a New Life

Parents often ask why a newborn baby should be checked by a chiropractor. Adjustments help alleviate spinal subluxations (misalignments of the vertebrae) caused by intrauterine constraint, abnormal positioning in the uterus, and spinal distress from the journey through the birth canal or during the delivery process itself. Ideally, babies should be checked and adjusted as soon as possible after birth.

Incidence of Need

M.S. Gottleib, a well-published researcher, reviewed the effects of the birth process and concluded, "The trauma from the birth process remains an underpublicized, and therefore significantly undertreated, problem."

"Survival of the newborn is governed mainly by the integrity and function of the vital centers in the brain stem," writes Andrew Towbin, a prominent researcher on birth trauma. "Yet paradoxically, the importance of injury at birth to the brain stem and spinal cord are matters which have generally escaped lasting attention."

Another published researcher, G. Gutmann, documented a study of more than one thousand infants. He found that approximately 80 percent of all newborns had some form of nerve dysfunction. Gutmann concluded that many health problems can arise from misalignment of the first vertebrae in the neck, resulting in a lowered resistance to infections in the ears, nose and throat. He also noted, however, that even an adjustment using the lightest pressure of the index finger could normalize an



infant's clinical picture.

His colleague, V. Fryman, examined 1,250 babies five days after birth and found that 95 percent of this group were not only misaligned, but also had cervical strain. She also noted that the infants responded to specific spinal and cranial care with immediate muscular relaxation and a greater ability to sleep. Another renowned researcher and practitioner, Heiner Biedermann, has done numerous clinical studies relating upper cervical misalignment in the newborn to prolonged labor and the use of extraction devices. He, too, has recorded significant improvements in the health of infants who receive specific adjustments after birth.

Nerve dysfunction associated with birth trauma may result in problems such as breathing weakness, mood irritability, digestive disorders, difficulty with feeding and attachment, sleeping problems, immunity deficits and neurological impairment. Left uncorrected, subluxations and their resulting nerve system dysfunction may develop into numerous health issues for the baby.

CONTINUED FROM OTHER SIDE

Proven Safe

Recently the International Chiropractic Pediatric Association published the preliminary results of its study in *Explore: The Journal of Science and Healing*, in an article entitled, "The Safety and Effectiveness of Pediatric Chiropractic: A Survey of Chiropractors and Parents in a Practice- Based Research Network." The preliminary data confirms what chiropractors have known for over 100 years: Chiropractic care for children is safe and effective.

On the issue of safety, out of 5,438 office visits, there were only three adverse events reported from the adjustments—a .00055 percent chance of negative reaction. Demonstrating a risk factor well below 1 percent, this study shows that children have a greater than 99 percent chance of suffering no problems when receiving chiropractic care. Furthermore, the three adverse events reported in the study were minor discomfort following the adjustment. Each was readily resolved with continued adjustments.

In the study, over 90 percent of the chiropractors and parents reported an adjustment-related improvement with respect to the children's presenting complaints. Even more interesting is the discovery of benefits unrelated to the initial problems. Both parents and doctors reported better sleeping patterns, improved behavior and more robust immune system function while under chiropractic care.

Increasingly, scientific research is supporting the clinical experience of chiropractors. Chiropractic care is growing in acceptance as a viable necessity for newborns. FWF

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