

Chiropractic Wellness Center of Macomb Email Practice Member Newsletter

This newsletter is provided courtesy of Karl R.O.S. Johnson, D.C., L.C.P. (hon.)

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Chiropractic Wellness Center of Macomb offers a blend of traditional vitalistically oriented chiropractic and progressive analytical procedures to locate the cause of your health problems. Our goal is to enable you to experience quality living for life.



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March...

Don't Let the Lion Get the Best of You.

There is an old saying that March comes in like a lion and goes out like a lamb. Unfortunately, in most regions of our country that means damp, cold, rainy and unpredictable weather. It is a time of year when arthritis and back pain sufferers feel like they are human barometers. Little nagging aches and pains become unbearable reminders of the season.

Chiropractic adjustments can make a profound difference in helping people manage their pain and stiffness during this time. Chiropractic treatments help regulate and balance the flow of nerve energy that is responsible for virtually every function of every cell in the human body. When the spine is in proper alignment, the body is given the opportunity to better deal with outside factors such as the environment.

March is also the time of year when people start to think about the outdoor/spring chores ahead. Although chiropractic is ideal for the short-term management of pain that comes from such things as the weather, it is also perfect for the long-term health of your body. It's time that you experienced the well being that comes from optimal health. Start thinking chiropractic today and make tomorrow the first block in your foundation for better health.

Patient Question of the Month: How Safe is Chiropractic?

In a word "Very". Chiropractic adjustments and procedures have been rigorously examined for safety, and its record is an enviable one. Six government inquiries into chiropractic worldwide in the last 25 years have all concluded that contemporary chiropractic health care is safe, effective and cost-efficient. An important thing to remember is that your chiropractor is trained to ask questions and perform tests to determine when a patient may be at risk, and adapt the treatment accordingly. Communication with patients is a key element of chiropractic treatment, so ask questions. Your chiropractic doctor will be more than happy to keep you informed every step of the way.

What is Sciatica?

Other than the spinal cord itself, the sciatic nerve is the thickest and longest nerve in the body. It begins in the lower back and travels down the back of the leg. "Sciatica" is the word that is used when this nerve is inflamed. The pain of sciatica can be severe and constant, or it may come and go depending on activity or weather changes. This is commonly called a "pinched nerve", although it is rarely truly pinched. The pain of sciatica is confusing because it is felt in the leg, but it is caused by the spine. Many patients with sciatica have little or no back pain, but a brief exam of the spine can quickly reveal the problem.

The conventional treatment for sciatic nerve pain has always been bed rest and painkillers, and in severe cases surgery. Modern research has shown this is not the most effective course of treatment, and surgery is now discouraged. Even the bed rest part of the treatment has been shown to worsen the problem if done for more than two or three days. Studies have shown that the most effective treatment is chiropractic adjustments along with a gentle exercise program.

In many cases, pressure on the sciatic nerve arises from the spine. A common cause of this pressure is a subluxation. A word that means "minor dislocation" and is used by chiropractors to describe a joint that does not move properly. If the joint does not work properly, it becomes troublesome to all the other parts in the area including the muscles, discs, and nerves.

the joints themselves are stressed, they wear out prematurely and cause the symptoms of arthritis. For some reason, those with sciatica have more nerve irritation than joint or muscle pain, and their pain radiates into the leg.

The symptoms of sciatica vary, and the severity of the pain that a person feels will depend on how badly the nerve is irritated. If the nerve is slightly irritated, the first symptom may be a "pins and needles" sensation that comes and goes. As the irritation worsens, the feeling may become constant. Pain, often a burning pain, is a sign of even more irritation. If the problem goes untreated, weakness of the leg comes next. When the irritation is at its worst there is a loss of reflex,

strength, and true numbness. In some cases of sciatica, the discs that rest between the bones of the back rupture, and a part of the disc actually hits the nerve. This is the most severe (and least common) type of sciatica. Sometimes the disc slowly gets reabsorbed, but in a few cases surgery is needed to remove the part of the

disc that is hitting the nerve. Routinely, these cases went to surgery, but several studies have shown that chiropractic can relieve the pain without surgery.

Chiropractic adjustments can be very effective in the treatment of sciatic pain. It is recommended that a thorough exam by a chiropractor be performed before contemplating any surgical procedure as treatment for sciatica.

Painkiller Warning for Pregnant Women

Pregnant women should avoid taking common painkillers such as ibuprofen because they may be linked to miscarriage.

A recent study published in the *British Medical Journal*, found that non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs - used to treat backache during pregnancy - are associated with an increased risk of miscarriage.

**To make your appointment with Dr. Johnson call
810.731.8840 or 810.726-KIDS**

NEWS YOU CAN USE TO SAFEGUARD YOUR HEALTH

Tea for Cardiovascular Health

Research from Boston University suggests that a few cups of tea each day might be helpful in preventing heart attacks. A number of previous studies have indicated that tea drinkers are not as likely to have a heart attack, but this study points to a possible reason. The researchers found that blood vessels were quicker to relax during stressful periods in people who drink tea, allowing for better circulation and therefore decreasing the likelihood of a heart attack or stroke.¹

1. Associated Press, November 13, 2000, reporting on work by Dr. Joseph A. Vita.

Exercise Can Be Risky, but Not As Much As Avoiding It

A 12-year study of physicians and exercise concludes that vigorous exercise can dramatically increase the chance of a person having a heart attack. However, this applies mostly to people who do not work out often. The study finds that sedentary people are seven times as likely to die suddenly after working up a sweat than those who work out five times per week.² The researchers conclude that the long-term benefits clearly outweigh the risks of instituting a well-designed exercise program.

2. *New England Journal of Medicine*, November 9, 2000.

Parkinson's from Pesticides

A study of rats by Emory University in Atlanta³ indicates a possible link between the pesticide Rotenone and Parkinson's disease. About half of the animals in the study began to exhibit symptoms of the disease during the five-week exposure. The researchers say that large numbers of dopamine-producing cells were destroyed in the rats, and that fibrous protein deposits (resembling the Lewy bodies found in Parkinson patients) were present. A study at the University of Rochester School of Medicine and Dentistry⁴ found Parkinson-like changes when using a mixture of paraquat and maneb in mice. How pesticides create these changes is not understood.

3. *Nature Neuroscience*, December 2000.

4. *Journal of Neuroscience*, December 15, 2000.

Smoking Anxiety

Teenagers who smoke a pack of cigarettes each day are five times more likely to suffer from a generalized anxiety disorder and/or agoraphobia, concludes a study by researchers from Columbia University and the New York State Psychiatric Institute. They were also 12 times more likely to have a panic disorder during early adulthood. The researchers say that their data indicate that smoking itself leads to the anxious states, not that the individuals sought relief from anxiety by smoking. The study examined 976 randomly sampled families in upstate New York.⁵

5. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, November 8, 2000.

Healthy Play

A study from the University of California-Berkeley concludes that people who play contract bridge have a better immune system. Blood samples show elevated levels of CD-4 positive T cells after a bridge game in this small study of elderly women. The researchers think that brain activity that involves memory and planning, particularly in the dorsolateral cortex, somehow influences and stimulates the immune system.⁶

6. Research presented to the Society of Neuroscience in New Orleans, November 8, 2000, by professor Marian Cleves Diamond.

Low-Dose Aspirin

A review of low-dose aspirin studies published in the *British Medical Journal*⁷ concludes that the risk of gastrointestinal hemorrhage still remains. It had been hoped that cutting the dosage would eliminate, or at least minimize this side effect, but this paper found that stomach bleeding still occurred nearly twice as often compared to patients taking placebos. This research reviewed 24 other works involving 66,000 patients.

7. *BMJ*, November 11, 2000.

Herbs Recalled

Eight brands of Chinese herbs are being recalled by two California companies after the FDA detected contamination by aristolochic acid, a compound that can inflict serious kidney damage.⁸ The FDA had stopped imports of herbs in the aristolochia family after incidents of kidney failure were reported in Britain and Belgium. The recalled products are:

Lotus brand (1-877-665-6884):

mu tong, lot number SL04461, expiration date 09/2004.

fang ji, lot number SW12261, expiration date 12/2004.

QualiHerb brand (1-800-533-5907):

ba zheng san, or *dianthus* formula, item No. 20209.

fang ji huang qi tang, or *stephania* and *astragalus* combination, item No. 20711.

chuan mu tong, or *clematis armandi*, item No. 10424 A.

wei ling xian, or *clematis*, item No. 12401.

han fang ji, or *stephania tetrandra*, item No. 10731.

ma dou ling, or *aristolochia*, item No. 11052.

8. Associated Press, January 4, 2001.

Exercise Damaged Hearts

Research from the University of Texas School of Public Health concludes that after a heart attack, active people are less likely to suffer from a second episode. According to data from 406 heart attack patients, those that were moderately active after their cardiac rehabilitation (activities ranging from gardening to jogging) had 60 percent fewer repeat episodes. Patients that increased their activity level over pre-heart attack levels did even better, decreasing their risk by 78 percent. The study followed patients over a five-year period.⁹

9. *Circulation*, November 2000.

Animal Antibiotics

Did you think doctors prescribed a lot of antibiotics to their patients? Farmers give their animals eight times as many as the average person gets in the United States, according to a report from the Union of Concerned Scientists. The practice, which spurs livestock growth, is seen as contributing greatly to the problem of antibiotic resistance that has many health officials very worried.¹⁰

10. Reuters, January 8, 2001.

Medicare Data Disclosure

The Department of Health and Human Services is considering changes in peer review regulations that would allow patients to get information on the quality of their treatment. Currently, peer review procedures are in place to determine if patients are getting treatment that meets certain standards of care, and while patients can request information about their cases, their physicians can block access to anything that might suggest a judgement error or other medical mistake had been made. Proposals have been made to give patients access to such information, though opponents suggest it will hurt the peer review system. HHS is seeking public input on the matter.¹¹

11. Associated Press, January 2, 2001.

MMR Reservations

A survey of almost 600 doctors and other health care participants in Wales reveals that nearly half have serious concerns about giving the routine second dose of MMR vaccine to children. The official medical party line is that there is no hard evidence of serious side effects such as autism or bowel disease from the vaccine; however, this report shows that many people are highly suspicious. The survey was done at the North West Communicable Disease Surveillance Centre in Wales.¹²

12. *BMJ*, January 13, 2001.

Self-Infections

A paper published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*¹³ reaches some very interesting conclusions. According to this study of hospital-acquired staphylococcus infections of the bloodstream, 80 percent of the patients were infected with strains that were normally resident in their upper respiratory systems, not necessarily transmitted from other sick patients. One might wonder what it is about a hospital environment that would make a patient susceptible to infection by organisms that normally reside harmlessly in a person's body, though the thrust of this paper seemed to be the need to find a way to sterilize patients during their stay.

13. *NEJM*, January 4, 2001.

