

CHIROPRACTIC & CEREBRAL PALSY

THERE IS EVIDENCE THAT CHIROPRACTIC CARE CAN BE HELPFUL TO CHILDREN WITH CEREBRAL PALSY



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DR. MARY NOCHIMSON

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Chiropractic intervention aims to improve the structural aspects of the body to clear the pathway for the brain to communicate with the nerves. This can result in improved strength, balance, flexibility and coordination skills, especially in the limbs.

There is evidence that chiropractic care can be helpful to children with Cerebral Palsy. A handful of studies indicates that children that underwent spinal manipulation could sit and stand with more ease. Also, the studies indicated that some children became more active, digested food more efficiently, slept more peacefully, and enjoyed improved coordination after undergoing chiropractic care.



In the book, "*Chiropractic Care of Special Populations*," author Robert D. Mootz reports on a few specific treatments that have been reported to have improved some conditions of Cerebral Palsy:

- Adjustment of the atlanto-occipital subluxations helped with children who had difficulty with sleeping, personality disturbances, and hypertonic musculature.

- Upper cervical spine adjustments created clinical improvements in a 5-year-old male with quadriplegic Cerebral Palsy.

- Adjustments can be helpful in cases of cranial dysfunction in the sphenobasilar junction in children who have a history of birth trauma or head injury where motor tracts of the medulla may be compromised.

- Manual release of the TMJ-related muscles, such as the masseter and temporalis, may ease excessive drooling.

- Myofascial release may be used to assist in decreasing the severity of spinal distortion and aid in stabilizing gait patterns in children with spastic Cerebral Palsy who have muscle contractures in the paraspinals, lateral thigh muscles, lower extremity abductors, Achilles tendons, and wrist extensors.

What is a chiropractic adjustment?

A chiropractor will use several techniques to determine where a subluxation, or misalignment, is. An adjustment is completed when the joints of the spine are moved beyond the point where they would normally move in a way where it does not harm or dislocate the joints. Doing so will require the chiropractor to use gentle force and trained expertise to complete the movements. Note: untrained individuals should not attempt to perform these procedures on another individual.

These adjustments will be made over a period of time – consisting of several appointments – to help a patient regain movement and minimize discomfort.

Clinical studies demonstrating the benefits of chiropractic

In one 2006 study, originally published in the Journal

Clinically, chiropractic has shown to be helpful in improving the following conditions:

- Back pain or problems
- Breathing
- Drooling (release of the TMJ-muscles)
- Gait patterns
- Hypertonic musculature
- Joint pain or stiffness
- Muscle contractures
- Neck pain or problems
- Pain and tension
- Scoliosis
- Seizures
- Sleep difficulties
- Other musculoskeletal conditions

of Vertebral Subluxation Research indicated that children with Cerebral Palsy that were determined to have subluxations showed improvement in their mobility after one month of care. One child demonstrated improvement in her ability to sit up, walk, and ambulate after 22 adjustments.

In a study published by the Journal of Pediatric, Maternal & Family Health determined that a 2-year-old boy with Cerebral Palsy was relieved of several symptoms that interfered with his mobility and ability to sleep. After seven months of care, he was able to pull himself into an upright position and was sleeping regularly. However, other features of his condition, such as uncontrolled movements, persisted.

All the information above can be found in the book *Chiropractic care of special populations*, By Robert D. Mootz and Linda J. Bowers, and in the article *Chiropractic Intervention* from the website CerebralPalsy.org.