



Wellness News Network™

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Neck Pain

Presented by:

Did you know two-thirds of adults experience neck pain at some point in their lives (Am Fam Phys 2004;69:1275). The intensity can range from a slight inconvenience to completely debilitating.

Chiropractors often care for patients with neck discomfort. This is because misaligned spinal bones (vertebrae) are a well known cause of neck pain. To learn more about the spine's connection to neck pain — and ways you can prevent being immobilized by it — read on!

There are essentially two broad classifications of neck pain: acute and chronic.

Acute Neck Pain

Acute neck pain, most often injury related, is sudden and intense. Acute neck pain tends to dissipate within a few days, weeks or months. However, once the pain resolves, lingering spinal misalignments may predispose patients to subsequent conditions, including neck pain, shoulder pain and headaches.

Acute neck discomfort has a variety of instigators.

Whiplash is one of the most common causes of acute neck injury. Many

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people are not aware that whiplash victims frequently don't experience immediate pain. In fact, symptoms may be delayed for months, or even years. And by that time, permanent damage may have occurred.

Regular chiropractic care may lessen the impact of whiplash by strengthening the immune system and promoting overall good health. A recent study found that "fair or poor health before the collision was associated with severe neck pain in females." A history of prior headaches and being unaware of the head's position at the time of the collision also worsened whiplash (Spine 2006;31:E98-E104).

Another common cause of acute neck pain is torticollis — a condition commonly known as "wryneck." This disorder ensues when the head is suddenly twisted to one side.

Traumas such as falls and sports injuries also result in acute neck pain.

Chronic Neck Pain

Chronic pain, on the other hand, is typically characterized by tenderness and aching lasting more than three months. Poor posture, such as

QUESTION:

Neck pain is associated with:

- a. High blood pressure
- b. Headache
- c. Congestive heart failure

Answer: b) Headache

True or False:

There are essentially two broad classifications of neck pain: acute and chronic.

Answer: True



improper ergonomics while working at a computer, can lead to chronic neck pain.

The Spinal Connection

The spine is actually a chain of intricately arranged bones (vertebrae) connected to form a single functional unit. This bony framework houses the spinal column. Nerves to all parts of the body enter and exit the spinal column through channels between vertebrae. When vertebrae are misaligned, transmission of nerves may be affected, sparking not only neck pain, but also a host of conditions, such as headaches, backaches, attention problems and infantile colic.

Your chiropractor corrects misaligned vertebrae — a phenomenon known as vertebral subluxation — with safe and gentle maneuvers called chiropractic adjustments.

A Multifaceted Approach to Preventing Neck Pain

Doctors of chiropractic often instruct patients to exercise neck muscles. Extensive research shows that strengthening these muscles may lead to a reduction in chronic neck pain and prevent relapses.

In one evaluation, researchers divided a group of 180 women (between the ages of 25 and 53) into three groups: (1) strength muscle training, (2) endurance muscle training and (3) a control group that participated in stretches and aerobic exercise not targeted for muscle strengthening.

“Endurance trainees exercised neck muscles with head lifts, and strength trainees used an elastic rubber band to strengthen flexor muscles. Both groups

performed dynamic shoulder and upper-extremity strengthening exercises using dumbbells, as well as trunk and leg muscle exercises and stretching exercises. Participants were encouraged to exercise at least three hours a week at home.” (Am Fam Phys 2004;69:427.)

Those who underwent strength training enjoyed a 73 percent drop in pain. The endurance group demonstrated a 59 percent pain reduction. In contrast, the control group reported a 21 percent reduction in pain.

Another scientific example of how exercise helps relieve neck pain involved 145 patients who received electromagnetic (infrared) therapy and advice on neck care. Of that number, 67 patients also participated in an exercise program with activation and strengthening of the deep neck muscles. After six weeks, the exercise group demonstrated “significantly better improvement” in disability score, pain and muscle strength than the control group (Spine 2005;30:E1).

Before rushing out to the nearest gym, however, ask the doctor which exercises are best for your current condition.

The Chiropractic Solution to Neck Pain

Life can sometimes be a pain in the neck! But it doesn't have to be.

Chiropractic's all-natural prevention strategy can help keep you and your family pain free.

Don't let the agony escalate: Schedule an appointment today. And don't forget to do the same for the youngest — and oldest — members of your family.

Quote to Inspire

“Good health and good sense are two of life's greatest blessings.”

- Publilius Syrus



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