

# Children and Chiropractic

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In preparing for birth, you do everything to ensure your baby's health. You eat right, take prenatal vitamins, avoid alcohol and cigarettes, avoid drugs, get extra rest, and take childbirth classes to help ensure a natural, drug-free birth.

Following birth, you breastfeed, knowing that it is the most superior form of nutrition, is natural, and, in most circumstances, is best for you and your baby. You love and care for your baby, knowing that he or she has an inborn (what chiropractors refer to as "innate") ability to grow and thrive.

Did you know that your child's spine is a vital component to his or her health? The nervous system is so important that the first cells to differentiate at about seven hours after conception become the brain and spinal cord! Your child's spine is literally his or her lifeline, because running through it is the spinal cord with its billions of nerve fibers sending messages and energy from the brain to all areas of the body.

The bones of the spine, known as vertebrae, serve to protect the delicate tissues of the spinal cord. Occasionally, one or more of these vertebrae become misaligned from the others. This misalignment is called a subluxation. When a subluxation occurs to the degree that it interferes with the proper function of the nervous system, the inborn (innate), self-regulating mechanism of the body cannot function as it should. This results in reduced health and quality of life.

Chiropractic is a form of health care that believes good health and well-being are the natural disposition of the body. At Palmer, we believe that chiropractors are the primary care professionals for spinal health and well-being. An essential part of good health is the proper alignment of the spine. The Doctor of Chiropractic specializes in finding and reducing the subluxation, thereby enhancing the body's ability to express health and function at its full potential.

The Doctor of Chiropractic reduces the subluxation by providing a chiropractic adjustment. Adjustments are safe, gentle and effective. When applied to a baby or small child, adjustments are made with no more pressure than you would use to test the ripeness of a tomato. Many times a sleeping baby can be adjusted without even being awakened.

## WHEN SHOULD YOU TAKE YOUR CHILD TO A CHIROPRACTOR?

**As soon as possible after birth**, as birthing procedures can put tremendous pressures on a child's spine.

**At regular milestone intervals** during the first year of life, such as learning to hold the head up, sit up, crawl, stand and walk. Your child's spine grows almost an additional 50 percent of its original birth length

during the first year of life! Many experts believe that uncorrected spinal problems during this early stage of development cause the chronic hard-to-correct subluxations seen in adults.

**When your child takes a fall.** Youngsters take numerous tumbles while jumping or running around, when learning to ride a bike, and during their day-to-day activities at home and on the playground. And just as cavities develop in your child's teeth without symptoms, subluxations can be present without causing pain. So it is important to visit your chiropractor for a check-up at least as often as you visit your dentist.

**When your child participates in athletic activities.** A tackle on the football field could twist a young spine. A softball pitcher could throw a vertebra or shoulder out of alignment. A soccer player could injure the neck while "heading" the ball. Regular spinal check-ups can detect underlying injuries such as subluxations, and early correction can reduce healing time and improve performance.

**When illness or disease occurs.** Subluxations do not allow your child's nervous system to function at its full potential, thereby lowering your child's ability to fight disease. Interference with your child's nervous system may cause or intensify the following conditions commonly seen by Doctors of Chiropractic:

- Colic
- Constipation
- Fever
- Ear ache
- Coughs and colds
- Back and neck pain
- Growing pains
- Bed wetting
- Headaches
- Poor posture
- Scoliosis
- Hyperactivity
- Allergies
- Asthma

**When you want to give your child a head start on good health.** Doctors of Chiropractic believe that it is more important to prevent disease than to wait until a disease or illness occurs. With regular adjustments and counseling on proper nutrition, sufficient rest, exercise, good posture, and a positive mental attitude, the Doctor of Chiropractic can help you raise a child whose body is structurally and functionally sound. Your child will also learn good health habits that will be of benefit for a lifetime.

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*For a comprehensive listing of published articles related to chiropractic care during pregnancy and for children please visit the International Chiropractic Pediatrics Association website at [www.icpa4kids.org](http://www.icpa4kids.org) and the International Chiropractors Association Council on Chiropractic Pediatrics website at [www.icapediatrics.com](http://www.icapediatrics.com).*