

# June 2002

## Correct Posture For Kids

Dr Anne Langford

This May was Correct Posture Month. Spinal posture is very important for maintaining health and preventing back pain for you and your children. Poor posture can result in not only muscle pains, strains, spinal problems, decreased lung capacity and digestive problems, but it can also negatively affect a child's self image as well. While standing up straight seems like an obvious way to correct poor posture, there are so many other activities that make up a child's daily routine that can have an impact on their spinal health.

When you take your child to a chiropractor, she will ask about your child's health history and conduct a physical exam, ultimately focusing on posture and movements, reflexes and the spine. The chiropractor is trained to diagnose any abnormal curvature or loss of flexibility in the spine, joints, or bones that are not moving properly. If there is a problem, the doctor of chiropractic can treat it naturally, without drugs or surgery. She may recommend adjusting the spine, a gentle treatment that helps your child's body operate at peak efficiency. The doctor may also offer advice on exercise and nutrition, or, if needed, refer you to another health care provider, such as an orthopedist.

To help encourage a healthy spine all year long, the doctors of Langford Chiropractic and the American Chiropractic Association (ACA) recommend these tips:

- When you lift your baby, always support his or her back and neck with your hands. Pick up an older child by grasping the body under both arms.
- Use an approved car seat that supports your baby's head and neck. Most states require the use of car seats for children under the age of 4 and weighing less than 40 pounds. Make sure the child safety seat is appropriate for the age and size of the child. A newborn infant requires a different seat than a 3-year-old toddler does.
- Provide a firm bed for your child. When choosing a mattress, look for one that is comfortably supportive. The new industry trend toward "selective support" is best. Selective support allows you to press down one area of a mattress, leaving other areas unaffected.
- Be selective when choosing a pillow for your older children. A pillow should not be so thick that it causes your child's head and neck to be propped up or angled sharply away from their body.
- Make sure the straps of your child's backpack are padded and worn over both shoulders, not just one. Also, the weight of the backpack should not be more than 5 to 10 percent of your child's body weight.
- Be sure your child's workstation is ergonomically correct for his or her size. Most workstations are fitted for adults. Position the computer monitor so the top of the screen is at or below the child's eye level, and make sure the chair at the workstation fits the child correctly. Place a footrest or box under the feet, if they do not touch the floor.

- If your child is involved in sports, make sure all equipment, including helmets, pads, and shoes, fits your child properly. If your teenage child is involved in soccer, make sure they are taught to “head” the ball properly. A young child should not use the heading technique at all.
- Make sure your child has enough calcium included in his or her diet. The ACA recommends 1 percent or skim milk for children over 2 years old and whole milk for those younger than 2. The calcium in milk is essential for healthy bones and reduces the risk of joint and muscle related injuries.
- Make sure your child avoids sugar-loaded, caffeinated and carbonated drinks. Rather, encourage them to drink plenty of water. Caffeine can dehydrate your youngster, and the high levels of phosphorous in sodas and other carbonated beverages can interfere with calcium absorption – a problem that could lead to osteoporosis down the road.
- Finally, make sure your child eats a well-balanced diet and gets plenty of rest. Consult with your chiropractor about nutritional supplements that might be appropriate for your child's stage of growth.

For more information on the importance of correct posture or any of the tips mentioned above, don't hesitate to contact your doctor at Langford Chiropractic.

## **Tendonitis**

**Dr Heather Karls**

Golfer's elbow, iliotibial band syndrome, Tennis elbow, and Little Leaguers elbow are all forms of tendonitis.

Tendonitis can affect anyone. Athletes are the group usually thought of as being affected the most, but anyone can be at risk because of the repetitive stress their work or hobby may place on the body.

If tendonitis is not addressed so that the cause is altered or eliminated, it will return. Tendonitis is extremely painful and can be life-altering, whether its in a toe or your shoulder.

Tendonitis is now often called tendinosis because there is not much inflammation present when the tendon is biopsied. Tendons connect muscle to bone so the pain is more intense and severe with movement and can be relieved with rest, although rest does not eliminate the source of the problem.

There are two questions you want to ask yourself when given the diagnosis of tendonitis or tendinosis. The first is “How did this happen?”, the second is “What can I do about it?”. To answer the first question we need to ask what has caused this tendon to become painful. Many times it is repetition. For example, Jumper's Knee is an aggravation of the tendon that connects the lower leg bone, the tibia, to the knee-cap and to the upper leg bone, the femur. If a basketball player is repeatedly going for jump shots, she will put extra strain on this tendon and can set up the symptoms of patellafemoral tendonitis (i.e. Jumper's Knees). However, people that have to squat and pick up boxes can also develop this form of tendonitis, as do shoe sales people and

veterinarians. So, your chiropractor will do a thorough history and physical examination to determine if the tendon is the problem. The team chiropractor for the Utah Jazz, Dr. Craig Buhler, sums it up this way, "If a muscle is overloaded beyond its ability, one of two things happen. Either the muscle fibers tear, and, or, the brain neurologically deactivates that muscle through the proprioceptive system." which is part of the body's built in safety system. This means that the body can't function properly and you feel pain in that muscle and joint.

Once tendonitis is present, what can you do about it? Not surprisingly, chiropractic care is extremely helpful in the treatment of tendonitis. Joint adjustments stimulate the nerves to reactivate the proprioceptive system (the body's ability to sense its position) and break the irregular reflex cycle that had been created by other muscles trying to compensate for the injured area.

What doesn't work long term is anti-inflammatories and cortisone pills or shots. While these may help with the pain at first, the tendonitis will return because the underlying problem has not been addressed. These medications can also cause side effects, both severe long term problems and short term side effects.

Ancillary treatments such as massage therapy, enzymatic supplements, and electric muscle stimulation may also be helpful. Your chiropractor will make specific treatment plans tailored to your age, need, injury severity and activity level. Please ask your doctor about any questions you may have about your tendonitis condition.

## **Fitness Tips for Golfers**

**Dr Laura Dronen**

Are you fit for golf? Did you know that the amateur golfer commonly injures the lower back and elbow? Amateur golfers also strain abdominal muscles as a result of overuse of the trunk muscles during the golf swing. Hip problems also tend to be a concern for golfers.

To get more exercise on the course, walk instead of riding in the golf cart. You will get a good aerobic workout and you can burn up to 600 calories. The more often you walk the course, the greater your endurance and the stronger your legs will become. Strong legs mean a more powerful swing and better endurance means playing your best from start to finish. Carrying your own bag will burn more calories and will strengthen your legs, arms, and back. Make sure to vary the shoulder you carry it on to maintain balance.

Improving form, fitness, and flexibility will give golfers a better game. I will outline a few stretches to perform before and after your game. Remember to hold each stretch for a minimum of 10 seconds.

- Stand facing a golf cart, feet shoulder width apart. Place both hands on top of the canopy with your arms fully extended. Slowly flex your head down between your arms, holding the stretch for 10 seconds.

- Interlock a club in both elbows so the club is behind you. Next slowly twist your upper body to each side.
- Stand in front of a golf cart, one arm length away. Reach back with your right hand and grab the canopy support at shoulder height. Place your left hand on your right hip and slowly turn away from the cart. Repeat with your left arm.
- Stand on the side of the golf cart or on the edge of a stair. Place both heels off the edge and slowly lower them toward the ground. Hold onto the golf cart or another support for balance. Drop your heels lower than your toes and feel the stretch in your calves and hamstrings. Hold for 10-20 seconds.

If you have lower back, elbow, wrist, or any type of pain that is affecting your golf game, don't hesitate to schedule an appointment.

## **Knowing Your Insurance Benefits**

**By Barb La Motte**

Would you know what to do if you were involved in an auto or work accident? Hopefully this will get you started.

You may or may not have pain right away, however your best bet is to be seen by your chiropractor as soon as possible. When you call to make an appointment, let us know that you have a new injury, otherwise you may not be given the appropriate amount of time for your appointment. On your visit, you will need to fill out new forms and have a new history and exam performed, possibly with x-rays. After making your appointment, make sure you have contacted your auto insurance company or your employer's workman's compensation carrier. They will also require forms to be filled out. They should also supply you with a claim number, the name of your claim adjuster, and a billing address. Bring this information to your first appointment. Without this information your claims could be delayed and payable by you. Once you have completed the above procedures, you should be ready for any future problems, if any should arise. It's that simple, with just a few phone calls an unfortunate accident can be very easy to deal with.

## **What's New at Langford Chiropractic**

**Deborah Goldstein**

Congratulations to Dr. Karls! She is expecting her second child in late November. Her son, Tristan will be 2 years old in late June. We are all very excited for the new addition to the Langford Chiropractic family.

Congratulations to our graduated intern Katie Burns-Ryan. Katie graduated from Northwestern College of Chiropractic in April. She will continue working with us until July. The doctors are thrilled to call her a colleague.

Welcome to our newest employee Tracy. Tracy started her employment as a chiropractic assistant in late April. She is originally from Montana and has been in the Twin Cities for about

ten years, off and on. She loves cooking and is currently into experimenting with vegetarian dishes. We are all very happy to welcome Tracy to the team.