

# Langford Chiropractic Clinic Newsletter, March 2001

## Upper Respiratory Infections in Children

by Dr. Anne Langford

Infections of the upper respiratory system are by far the most common cause of illness in infancy and childhood, accounting for approximately 50 percent of all illness in children younger than 5 years of age and 30 percent in children between the ages of 5 and 12 years. Young children normally have four or five such illnesses a year.

Patients with symptoms of upper respiratory infection, especially those in the pediatric age group, frequently present to chiropractic clinics. Case reports frequently describe rapid improvement in upper respiratory symptoms following adjustment of minor spinal misalignments, especially in the neck.

In this article, we examine one possible anatomical and physiological mechanism for the cause of upper respiratory infections. Upper respiratory infection is a general description of a group of conditions which includes common cold, purulent rhinitis (runny nose), pharyngitis (tonsillitis), otitis media (earache), sinusitis, influenza, and bronchitis.

### Hypothesis

If it is that vertebral subluxations are part, either of the cause or of the origin of the upper respiratory infection process, how then does correcting the spine help? To answer this question, we must understand how spinal misalignments can be the cause of upper respiratory infections. The body requires an efficient lymphatic drainage system to dispose of bacterial and viral bugs. The lymphatic system is responsible for attacking these bugs and clearing them from our systems.

Each of the upper respiratory conditions previously listed have a similarity in their cause, being that each would appear to involve an inadequacy in the lymphatic drainage from the head and neck.

The mechanism by which lymph is cleared through the body is known as the "lymphatic pump". This mechanism is activated by muscular contraction, by passive body movements, or by manual stimulation of lymph nodes. One of the major factors therefore controlling lymph flow is the degree of motion of the tissues. The greater the motion, the greater will be the rate of lymph flow. Conversely, lack of motion of these tissues and muscles would make it extremely difficult for lymph to flow along the lymph ducts in the neck. Vertebral subluxations, particularly in the neck, which produce associated muscle spasm, could therefore be the cause of swollen lymph

glands in the head and neck. As a consequence, the body would be unable to clear bacteria and viruses to which it is constantly exposed through the mouth and respiratory passages.

Scientific studies of patients with otitis media, or ear infections, have been reported in the literature showing significant evidence of reduced lymph drainage from the eustachian tube. Pulek and Horwitz (1973) proposed obstruction of the eustachian tube lymphatics as being the mechanism for the production of serous otitis media. Two early studies by Robison proposed that the cause of serous otitis media was due to lymphatic obstruction of the nasal passage.

The mechanism presented here is a hypothetical one. Chiropractors have been treating children for most of the 100 years since the first chiropractic adjustment. The relief through chiropractic spinal adjustments, which has been afforded to many children who have been suffering with chronic upper respiratory infections, earaches and sore throats, has finally prompted some serious research. The foundation for Chiropractic Education and Research has commissioned a large scale project to evaluate the consistency of the results which spinal adjustments may achieve for children with ear infections. We look forward to the results of this study which may bring new hope for children whose ear infections just do not respond to antibiotics.

## **Getting to know Stephanie**

**by Stephanie Zahara**

I'd like to introduce myself to all of our patients at Langford Chiropractic. My name is Stephanie and I am a new chiropractic assistant here. I am fairly new to the area. I recently moved here from Santa Cruz, California. The winter here has been a bit hard on me, but I am very excited about being able to experience a beautiful Minnesota spring. I enjoy traveling and meeting new people and I hope that with the warmer weather approaching, I'll be able to see more of the sights of my new home. Thank you all for welcoming me into the clinic. I hope our future together is long and rewarding.

## **A Fun Day at the Clinic**

**by Dr. Heather Karls**

First of all, as my patients know, I love my work. Everyone I am privileged to meet and work with is unique and the conditions we are working on together are indicative of the wide variety of complaints I see everyday as a Chiropractor.

I would like to give you an example of my typical day. After reviewing this article with my support staff (Barb), I have had to omit ages and identifying details. However, you will still get the idea.

A woman has come in that has had headache pain. She has had this headache pain since a car accident several years ago. She has been to several medical doctors, had physical therapy, and when nothing helped her, an MRI was obtained. The MRI showed no abnormalities. She started at our clinic to get relief from her pain and get off the Imitrex. After 3 treatments she went from

a 8 on a 1 to 10 (10 being horrible) pain scale to a 3, and described her pain as “infrequent and minimal”.

Then, there is a baseball player who injured his shoulder. He was diagnosed by an orthopedist as having “rotator cuff” syndrome. After treatment for this condition he was not any better. His coach referred him to me because surgery was his next option. Happily, with shoulder adjustments and myofascial release by our massage therapists, he is pitching again for his team.

Low back pain, low back pain, low back pain! Young, old, men, women, hockey players and gymnasts, armchair athletes and hardworking moms, and each is different in their presentation, length of time they have had pain and how we are treating it.

Ankle pain is another frequent complaint, along with plantar fasciitis, or “heel spurs”. Most commonly, the patient is a female and works on a hard floor where she has to wear dress shoes.

An older man presents to our clinic with knee pain that he states was present from his football days. He has had knee surgery for a torn meniscus and a ACL ligament tear on the other knee. He has had severe degeneration and the arthritis pain has prompted him to consider surgery again. We advised him to get his knees adjusted, take glucosamine sulfate, and strengthen the muscles around his knees with exercises I tailor to his need and level.

We see many pregnant women in our clinic also, suffering from a variety of complaints. Chiropractic care not only helps the pregnancy pain, it also helps make the labor and delivery go smoothly, as I myself can attest to!

But my favorite parts of every day are the patients that are here because they want to remain healthy. Those of you in need of a “tune-up”, who are feeling good but want to feel great.

I would love to help you or someone you love feel great. If you are in need of an adjustment whether for pain or to maintain health, please call me at (651) 699-8610.

## **Knowing Your Insurance Benefits**

by **Barb La Motte**

Writing my article for this edition has not been easy for me. I make a concerted effort to review your chiropractic benefits with you. Unfortunately, I don't think that this is the case. I still get repeated questions for which I gave the answers to in our previous newsletters. I know some of you may not have gotten our previous issues because you were a patient after we mailed them out and I understand that. What I would like now is for all of you that have questions regarding benefits or concerns about which health plan to sign up for to call me. I am here Monday through Friday from 9 to 5 and would love to give all of you a chance to talk with me about your concerns. I can either do this at your next appointment or by telephone, all you have to do is let me know. I want to make sure that all of our patients are educated in the fine art of insurance.

**Tip of the Month:**

When using your insurance at a new doctor's office make sure to call your insurance company first. Tell them the specific name of the office and they will give you your specific benefits for that office. Benefits do change from office to office.

## The Computer Athlete

by Jennifer Olson

It's no wonder with the explosion of computers in the home and workplace that more and more people who are spending their days, and often evenings, in front of the computer are complaining of muscle tension and pain. Does this sound like you? You start your workday feeling relaxed and enthusiastic but by the end of the day you often have a headache and/or pain atop the shoulders, between the shoulder blades, and even numbness with tingling down the arms. Towards the end of the workweek you feel worse. You then spend the weekend recovering and on Monday the pain starts all over again.

To get out of this exhausting cycle, changing positions of the keyboard and monitor can help but may offer only temporary relief. A massage before your chiropractic adjustment can offer additional help by creating a buffer of elasticity and relaxation of the tight muscles. Changing breathing patterns and doing some simple stretches can also provide long term relief.

When people sit for long periods of time at desks, especially poorly designed ones, it is natural to let the head fall forward and out of alignment. The muscles at the base of the neck then get tighter and tighter in order to keep the head from falling all the way to the desk. Consequently, the place at the base of the skull where the muscles attach is one of the most common sites at which tension headaches begin. Even after you leave the desk, your shoulders stay where they have been all day—up around your ears. If this is combined with breathing with the neck and shoulder girdle, as opposed to breathing with the diaphragm, the accessory breathing muscles (scalenes, upper trapezius, and sternocleidomastoid) have been strengthened in incorrect position with the continual activation of every breath. Thus, as every breath is taken, the cervical spine and discs are compressed where the nerves exit the spine. As a result, the computer athlete may suffer from muscular pain from the muscles that are working overtime, from the pain-sensitive structures in the outer fibers of the disc, and/or from irritating the spinal nerves. These muscles are crying out for a much needed holiday and this comes when computer users breathe with their diaphragm, instead of neck and shoulders.

Even though the computer athlete starts breathing abdominally and fully, all may not be right. Significant residual tension remains from years of tense breathing habits, head forward posture, and various microtrauma. To be resolved, this chronic muscular tension usually requires a combination of soft tissue manipulation and self care. A signal for a break is when tension is felt building at the back of the neck or at the base of the skull. Simple side to side, front to back stretches of the neck coordinated with deep abdominal breathing can help release tension. Together with regular chiropractic adjustments and deep tissue massage the chronic cycle of pain and tension can be broken. Call today to set up an appointment.

Remember that massage gift certificates make excellent birthday presents!

## **Clinic News!**

As many of you know, Dr. Karls' son was born on June 30 of last year. She would like to again thank all of you who make her take the time from instructing you in exercises to distract her by asking about Tristan. Dr. Karls and her husband Tom are enjoying every minute of parenthood, while their dog Giselle is coping by being extra needy and trying to steal Tristan's stuffed toys. An updated picture is on her desk if any of you ever want to see it.

As some of you may know, we at Langford Chiropractic have been negotiating with the owner of our building on expanding into the space that Valvoline is currently in, when their lease is up in March. We are close to an agreement with the building owners and hope to begin construction in late spring.

In the last week of February, chiropractic assistant Stephanie Zahara went to Mardi Gras in New Orleans and had an excellent time.

Massage therapist Tony Erickson has been very active with the U of M Gopher swim team lately. In the last two weeks of January he went to spring training with them in Key West, Florida. That training prepared the team for the Big 10 competition that went on at the U in the last weekend of February.

## **Interns' Corner**

**by Christie McKittrick**

Hi, my name is Christie McKittrick, and I will be working with Dr. Langford until August. I am fortunate to have the opportunity to have her as a mentor and to work with all of you. I am in my 8th trimester at Northwestern College of Chiropractic, where I will be graduating from in November, 2001. I am originally from Sioux Falls, SD, but my love for football brought me to the sea of red - Go Huskers! I graduated from the University of Nebraska - Lincoln with a bachelors degree in Exercise Science. My desire to educate others on the power of natural healing brought me to chiropractic school. I look forward to meeting and learning from you all. See you soon.

**by Matthew Maki**

Hi, my name is Matt. I am in my final trimester at Northwestern College of Chiropractic, I will be working with Dr. Karls on Thursdays and Fridays until I graduate in April of this year. I recently proposed to my girlfriend of 5 years, and she said yes. I enjoy participating in martial arts of all kinds, including boxing and wrestling. I am currently taking extra classes in the treatment of sports injuries and I plan to stay in the Twin Cities area after graduation.

**by Laura Papenfuss**

Hi! I am a T9 at Northwestern College of Chiropractic and will graduate in July and plan to practice in the area. I am currently working with Dr. Karls on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays. I live in Como Park with my husband and kitty cat. I enjoy running, playing soccer, doing Tae-Bo, windsurfing, reading, and watching my husband cook Thai food. I admit that I am not a very good cook and my husband threatened to give me cooking lessons for a wedding present. I actually tricked him into thinking that I can't cook so he does most of the cooking! This trick is most effective during the first six to twelve months of dating.