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Newsletter

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Pain is Not the Problem

Many people begin chiropractic care because of an ache or a pain. Pain can be distracting, debilitating, irritating or annoying. Pain can be chronic, acute, intense or intermittent. Pain can be sharp or dull. And pain can be localized or general.

Pain may be a pain, but pain is not the problem!

Pain is a symptom. A signal. A sign. An indicator. A warning. Pain is no more a problem than a traffic signal or your alarm clock jarring you awake. If there's a problem, it's the meaning we attach to the pain.

When we meet patients who are in pain, our first thought is that they must have exceeded some physical, chemical or emotional limit to which they can no longer adapt. So, while we're interested in the pain, we're even more interested in what was the underlying cause of the pain. Did it just happen? Has it been present a long time? What circumstances brought it on? Plus, what change(s) should be made to avoid this in the future?

Do you know someone who thinks pain is a problem? Please send them to a chiropractor because to us, pain is never a problem!

Informed Consent

Everyday we face choices. Even ordering water at a restaurant can be complicated with sparkling or still, lemon or not, room temperature or chilled... you get the idea. Maybe sometimes we might appreciate having a few decisions taken out of our hands. Maybe it might be nice to just sit back and let someone else make a few of the hard choices for us. Or maybe not.

What is Informed Consent?

Typically the concept of "Informed Consent" has to do with a medical procedure or treatment. It is the legal procedure necessary to ensure that a patient knows all of the risks and costs involved in an offered treatment for their specific diagnosis. Basically, the patient needs to be told of what the treatment will entail, the potential risks versus the expected benefits, as well as if there are possible alternatives and what the risks and benefits would be should they choose an alternative.

In all cases the patient must be competent and coherent to make decisions and the consent must be voluntary in order to be considered valid.

Informed Consent and Pregnancy

There are a lot of decisions to be made when pregnant; for instance, what kind of prenatal vitamin to take, find out the sex or wait – this list goes on and on. While these may seem like big decisions, they really are inconsequential when compared to the really big decisions like home birth or hospital (or something in

Killer Painkillers

In a recent New England Journal of Medicine article, researchers disclosed that the adverse effects of using NSAIDs (Non Steroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drugs) like aspirin, ibuprofen and others, can include stomach bleeding, ulcers and, in some cases, death.

Millions take NSAIDs without much thought. However, research has shown that bleeding and ulcers occur half the time... often, with no symptoms. Among the people who develop serious bleeding from NSAIDs and require visits to the hospital, 10 to 15% will die. In fact, 2,000 people in the United Kingdom die each year from gastro-duodenal lesions from taking NSAIDs.

These drugs simply cover up your body's warning signs and fool the body. Every day we help locate and reduce the underlying cause of many types of health problems. Is it time for a chiropractic checkup for you, or someone you know, who thoughtlessly reaches into the medicine cabinet?

between), natural birth or not, doula or not, episiotomy or not. Yes, these are all decisions that you can make.

Research has begun to show that much of what women have been told for years regarding standard procedures during pregnancy and delivery have been misunderstood, misconstrued or outright myths.

Take as an example the episiotomy, a procedure that enlarges the vaginal opening during childbirth by making an incision in the skin between the vaginal opening and the anus. The argument in favor of this procedure is that it's better to make the incision than allow the skin to potentially rip, causing a tear that would be more difficult to repair. Supposedly episiotomies help women avoid incontinence and can improve their sex lives following childbirth.

A study published in the Journal of the American Medical Association showed that this is absolutely not the case; these are all myths. Episiotomies have no affect on any of the above. Additionally, the cut is generally deeper than the width of a large paperclip and about as long, whereas tears (when they do happen) are often small and do not require stitches.

Avoiding Pregnancy Procedures

Medical procedures should require informed consent but they don't always. Many times the situation leaves room for a doctor to make what they feel is a "medically necessary" decision without your consent. For example: breaking your water; inserting an epidural; or using forceps, the vacuum extractor or other means to deliver the baby. That's why it's important to have a doula or birth advocate, especially when giving birth in a hospital.

Delivery is an emotional, albeit exciting time during which your feelings and choices may be overlooked. A birth advocate or doula can make sure that your choices, your informed choices, are respected.

A professional doula can even help you prepare by discussing the situations that may arise during your delivery and make note of what your decision would be in each of those scenarios.

The Cost of Illness

Are you one serious illness away from bankruptcy? Many in America with “health” insurance policies think they’re protected from the burden of huge medical bills. Sadly, that’s just not true. In a Harvard University study of almost 2,000 Americans in bankruptcy court, half said that illness or medical bills drove them to bankruptcy.

Every 30 seconds in the United States, someone files for bankruptcy because of a serious health problem. Over 75% of those had insurance but lost coverage during the course of their illness. Thus, they face the double disaster of illness and bankruptcy.

“If you’re sick enough, long enough, you’re likely to be financially ruined,” cautioned Dr. David Himmelstein the lead author of the Harvard study.

Once thought largely the result of bad financial choices, bankruptcy is increasingly accompanying serious health problems. People who go under from medical debt are mostly middle- or working-class homeowners.

The solution? Don’t get sick. But how?

Many people neglect their health until their symptoms are unbearable. By then, problems can be well advanced or even irreversible. That’s why chiropractors suggest wellness visits. Visiting a chiropractor when you feel great may sound unusual or even a little strange, but preventive chiropractic care and similar measures may actually provide more “insurance” than your insurance.

Informed Consent and Vaccinations

This has become quite the controversial topic in recent years. As studies have been published linking autism to the MMR vaccine and then refuted with other studies, the topic of informed consent has become a delicate issue.

The right to voluntarily consent to (or decline) vaccinations should be as human a right as any other we take for granted. Considering the information provided by a pediatrician, and then deciding whether or not to inject our child with a chemical to try to create an immunity to an infectious disease, should be a choice. In many countries it is and in many countries it is not.

Currently, in the United States there are only 18 states that will allow a parent a philosophical, personal or conscientious belief exemption to vaccination, and recently one of those states, Washington, passed a law that said the parent must get a medical doctor to “sign off” on that exemption. Without this exemption, a child must be vaccinated in order to enter the public school system, making vaccinations compulsory in 32 states. The purpose being a theoretical possibility called herd immunity; vaccinate everyone and those that can’t be vaccinated will be protected by the immunity of the rest of the “herd”.

The UK and Canada do not require vaccination but they have a similar immunization schedule to the United States and United Kingdom. What is this schedule? Three times the number of vaccines given to children in the early 80’s.

The average child is expected to receive nearly three dozen doses of more than a dozen vaccines.

Immunization Choices

Informed consent is just that, the right to make an informed choice regarding what is best for you and your children. This should include vaccinations, and in some places it does but for how long? While the herd mentality of herd immunity continues to grow, it whittles away at our basic human right to choose for ourselves what we’re going to have done to us and our children.

The Master System

The nervous system is made up of two parts: the central nervous system or CNS, and the peripheral nervous system or PNS.

The brain and spinal cord comprise the central nervous system. The spinal cord transmits sensory messages to the brain and motor messages from the brain.

Sensory nerves carry messages to the brain. If you touch a hot stove, pain receptors on certain types of nerve cells tell your brain to move your hand. Motor nerves send signals from the brain to the muscles in the body. These nerves help us to do things such as walk, kick a ball or pick up an object.

The peripheral nervous system transports messages between the central nervous system and the body. It consists of cranial and spinal nerves that carry messages to and from every nerve in your body. Part of the peripheral nervous system is called the autonomic nervous system. The actions of the autonomic nervous system are automatic or involuntary - actions that include breathing, heartbeat and digestion.

The autonomic nervous system is made up of the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems. The sympathetic system alerts the body when there is an emergency or danger. When this happens, your heart beats faster, your blood pressure rises and your pupils dilate in what is called a “flight or fight” response. The parasympathetic system returns your body to normal once the danger has passed.

Chiropractic care is designed to restore the integrity of your nervous system so that everything works the way it’s supposed to. That’s why it’s vital to have your spine checked regularly for optimum health and well-being.

Informed Consent and You

What it boils down to is this: do we really live in a free society? Can we actually make our own healthcare decisions? The American Medical Association says, “Informed consent is more than simply getting a patient to sign a written consent form. It is a process of communication between a patient and physician that results in the patient’s authorization or agreement to undergo a specific medical intervention.”

Sure that sounds like it’s putting the power in our hands but notice the wording communication “that results” in the patient’s agreement. The end result is agreement, not understanding or acceptance. Yet, the right of the patient should be to decide for themselves; not to be talked into something, but to be given all the information and then allowed to make their own decision based on the data presented.

Informed consent should be an educated decision.

For more information...

www.nvic.org – National Vaccine Information Center

www.americanpregnancy.org – American Pregnancy

www.dona.org – Doula of North America

www.birthingbetter.com – Birthing Better

www.icpa4kids.org – ICPA Website for Parents