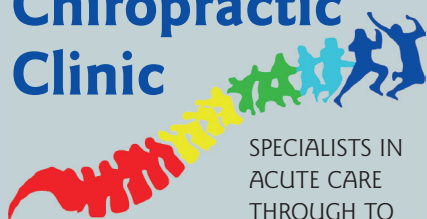



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Talk chiropractic treatment and many people immediately conjure up a mental image of a middle aged person bent over and clutching the small of their back. But the fact is you are never too young to benefit from a chiropractic check or treatment.

Some of my clients haven't even taken their first breath yet. Well okay I admit that's a bit of an exaggeration, but the still to be born are responsible for their Mum's back or sciatic pain which can often be relieved through gentle manipulation, stretches and exercises.

Mums who receive chiropractic care throughout their pregnancy, recognising it as a safe and effective alternative to pain medication, often report easier births.

But it is important for people to realise it is not just the mother who has a hard time during the birthing process. The baby has to pass through the birth canal and any woman who has experienced a natural birth well knows what it takes to push out her baby. It's not hard to imagine the pressure the child feels during this birthing process. Pressure which goes on its spine, head and neck just as it goes on the mother's pelvis as it separates for the birth. This can cause changes in the function of the baby's spine and the mother's pelvis.

I bet you all know of women who have experienced back or pelvic pain for years and put it down to when little Johnny or Jenny was born. They think this pain is natural, goes hand in hand with being pregnant and giving birth.

Mums need to ensure their bodies – spine and pelvis - restore their normal function after birth because if not corrected the further assault on their bodies from feeding and constantly picking up their baby can cause ongoing problems which in turn can lead in time to arthritic changes.

As far as the new baby itself checks are

carried out of its hips and reflexes but we neglect to look at the function of the spine and consider the trauma it has gone through in the birth canal. Often babies won't tell you they are in pain apart that is from grizzling, not wanting to feed, favouring one side during feeding or sleeping or generally being unsettled. All of these factors are signs of discomfort, possibly due to irritation of the spine or nervous system.

All mothers should get their babies checked to see they are okay and I stress it is not an expensive procedure. This need for a check is also important for babies born by emergency C section. The baby is pulled out in the opposite direction against the muscle contractions of the mother and this causes pressure particularly to the baby's neck.

Babies are not treated by manipulation, but chiropractors use pressure point massage, cranial massage, the activator technique which causes a one millimeter vibration which is usually enough to restore normal movement in a child.

Often chiropractors treat children parents describe as slow or lethargic. I treated one little boy only to have the mother return the following week asking that I "turn him down". Clearing out their nervous system meant they could now function properly with the resulting increase in energy flow and help them achieve their full potential.

It is important people do not leave it too late to seek treatment because it may not be possible to restore normal function. In such cases all we can do is keep people at their current level and stop their condition worsening. ■