



NECK AND BACK PAIN

At **Integrated Health Care** we have a different approach to the treatment of neck and back pain. As chiropractors we address the presenting complaint; however we are interested in the many contributing factors that may influence the function and mechanics of the spine and pelvis.

The spine surrounds and protects the spinal cord plus it gives access to most nerves in the body. Therefore it could be said that if the body is unbalanced, the associated area of the spine often goes into a 'heightened state' which may cause symptoms, i.e. pain. The Nervous System has become overloaded due to imbalances in the body. This could be likened to a 'fuse blowing' in an electrical system!

Apart from acute injury, have you ever wondered why you may experience back or neck pain from performing activities you have done a hundred times before i.e., lifting, bending, or upon waking from your sleep? Plus why do your injuries not heal quickly but turn into chronic problems?

OUR UNIQUE APPROACH IS TO:

1. Firstly, evaluate the function of the **Immune and Emotional Systems** which promote healing, decrease inflammation and reduce stress. Because the Immune and Emotional systems are very closely associated, neck and back pain during and/or after periods of stress is a common symptom. Generalised inflammation of joints and tissues is a common finding in patients with chronic health and/or joint/muscle pain. In many cases when this inflammatory condition is addressed, structural/spinal work is kept at a minimum, plus lasting results are achieved.
2. Secondly, examine and evaluate the bony structures that surround the nervous system, i.e., skull, neck, back and pelvis. Other structures that have a major influencing factor are the shoulder girdle, ribs and rib cage, diaphragm (very large umbrella like muscle that separates the lungs from the abdomen), pelvic floor and groin, tailbone, hips, knees, hands and feet. These other structures often cause chronic irritation and imbalance of the neck and spine.

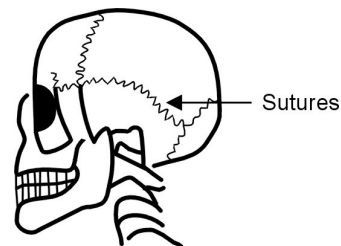
We observe that integration from 1 and 2 above gives faster relief from fewer treatments.

1. THE SKULL (CRANIUM)

The cranium or skull is made up of bones to protect the most important organ of the body – the brain. The only fully moveable part of the cranium is the jaw or TMJ (temporomandibular joint). The external bone plates of the cranium and some internal bones meet at joints or 'sutures.' Whilst these sutures in the adult are not moveable, they are pliable and should interact with one another in a synchronous, harmonious way which is necessary for normal nerve and energy patterns throughout the body. The movement controls cerebral spinal protection and function. Cerebral spinal fluid is the fluid surrounding the brain and spinal cord. It is responsible for many functions in conjunction with central nervous system control and balance.

Improper cranial bone movement is called a 'cranial fault'. Cranial faults can be caused by any trauma or shock to the bony structures, such as birth traumas, falls, whiplash, chronic sinus infections, jaw problems or chronic stress situations (jaw clenching).

These cranial faults most commonly develop from stress, shocks or traumas to other parts of the body rather than to the head or skull itself, through a 'shock wave effect' throughout the body, i.e., you fall onto your buttock causing the shock waves to transmit through the entire body up to and including the cranium.



The central nervous system is the control centre of the entire body and therefore the skull and its interconnections constantly try to adapt and monitor every stress in the body. When our body is overloaded physically with old injuries, or overstressed due to chronic, emotional/mental factors, our adaptations and monitoring systems become overloaded causing cranial faults. This in turn puts further stress on the spine, rib cage and pelvis resulting in acute neck and back pain. If over a period of time these faults are not

corrected, the condition becomes chronic resulting in chronic recurring issues of the neck, shoulder, ribs and lower back areas.

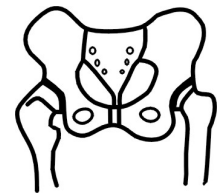
2. THE SPINE

The spine is made up of 24 moving segments (vertebrae). These vertebrae protect the spinal cord and nerves which travel to almost all muscles, organs, blood vessels, the brain and other nerves. The spine is an integral part of the body and nervous system which can become compromised by injury to soft tissue structures that surround and interconnect to it. The spine and its surrounds often become chronic areas of pain due to the imbalance of structures that attach to it and influence its movement, ie, skull, diaphragm, ribs, pelvis and feet.

Adjustment of spinal vertebrae (the art of chiropractic treatment) has produced great and at times almost miraculous results in patients with varying health issues and pain. At Integrated Health we are proud of our profession and its traditions of treatment approach. Our approach is focused on keeping spinal and neck adjustments to a minimum in both force and frequency.

3. THE PELVIS

The pelvis is shaped like a basin in which the internal organs sit, i.e., reproductive organs, bladder and bowel. It is also the point at which the transfer of forces from the ground up is dispersed through the hips into the pelvis. If the pelvis is unbalanced, these forces are transmitted unevenly affecting the spine and the cranium.



4. THE FEET



The feet are probably the most pliable and adaptable joint complexes in the body. Reflexes for balance and posture are contained in the feet. If this area has been injured or is not functioning optimally, the forces imparted through the legs to the pelvis will be uneven. The pelvis and spine are required to compensate for these mechanical distortions, often leading to chronic spinal pain. In some cases orthotics are necessary to restore balance.

WHAT WE COMMONLY SEE

Cranial, pelvic, spine and foot dysfunction characteristically is seen in patients who experience chronic pain in the neck, low back and between the shoulder blades. The pain is usually worse when sitting, standing and resting in bed, whereas movement will usually relieve it i.e., walking, exercising.

Our approach at Integrated Health Care is to coordinate and balance these four main structures to allow them all to move in harmony and without compromise or stress. This way the nervous system can be less stressed and more efficient.

SOME CAUSES OF STRUCTURAL PROBLEMS ARE

1. Accident or trauma to any part of the body because of the shockwave effect, i.e., sporting accidents, whiplash etc.
2. Bite problems/lack of teeth – especially posterior teeth causing a ‘collapsed’ bite and cranial problems.
3. Dentures that are too old or ill fitting.
4. Chronic tension and stress resulting in biting excessively – cranial problem.
5. Immune and/or hormonal problems causing joint and muscular inflammation.
6. Nutritional deficiencies i.e. iron deficiency, mineral or vitamin deficiency. Chemical toxicity, e.g., medications, environmental toxins, allergens (intolerances or allergic reactions.)
7. Infections or inflammation of any body tissue resulting in reflex pain to the spinal structures.
8. Ergonomic conditions – postural issues, work based issues, sleeping supports (beds, pillows etc), footwear etc.

Note: Many patients just accept that they have arthritis and degeneration in their spines. In our experience, there is no reason that with treatment and maintenance, they can greatly improve their life quality and decrease their pain level to the point of being able to participate in ‘Normal’ daily activities.