

How Does the Spine Get out of Alignment? (become subluxated)

Over the past 35 years of practice, the most common question I have been asked is, How did my spine get this way? Patients often look at their xrays and see the misalignments and degeneration and wonder what caused the subluxations.

Both medical and chiropractic research has shown that the first damage to the spine and resultant subluxations often occur at birth. The birth process is potentially a traumatic event. This is especially true with difficult deliveries where the doctor pulls on the head to pull the baby out of the birth canal. I have a collection of published medical reports that say that all newborn babies who experience a difficult birth should be checked by a chiropractor to have their spine adjusted, when indicated. Traumatic damage to the upper cervical spine of the newborn can cause a lifetime of health problems. It is for this reason that I recommend having all babies checked for subluxation shortly after birth. This is especially true for babies who experience health conditions shortly after birth. We have found that eliminating pressure on the baby's brainstem and spinal cord, often leads to dramatic improvement in their health.

As toddlers learn to stand up and walk, they often will fall hard, backwards, on their bottoms. This jars the spine, especially in the neck area, as the muscles that protect the spine are still poorly developed. These falls can produce subluxations in the spine and, as a result, affect the health of the child. I recommend that all young children have regular chiropractic checkups. When subluxations are corrected early, the child's spine and nerve system maintain optimal balance and result in overall improved health for the child.

As children become involved in sports, gymnastics, dancing, horseback riding, bicycles, motorcycles, etc., (other sources of spinal stress and trauma), spinal subluxations occur. For this reason, I recommend that all

children have regular spinal adjustments to keep their spines free of vertebral subluxation.

Children and teenagers should have regular chiropractic adjustments maintain much higher levels of health, need much less medical care and are more balanced emotionally. It is common to see children raised with regular chiropractic care, grow up and go off to college, having never seen a medical physician for illness. I have six such children.

Adults receive spinal subluxation in many ways. Automobile collisions, work-related injuries, sports, yardwork, poor posture, slips and falls, and other factors all cause spinal stress and can result in spinal misalignments. Vertebral subluxations cause nerve stress and disrupt the nerve impulses and information that regulates every function in our bodies. Subluxations that remain for months and years, cause local tissue damage, nerve and joint degeneration, and observable changes on the xrays. Uncorrected subluxations, over time, lead to a general weakening of the spinal support structure, including ligaments, muscles and spinal discs. This degeneration is so common and widespread, that science has developed four phases of spinal degeneration. Some degenerative changes are reversible with chiropractic care, over time. Generally, the more time that the spine is subluxated and out of balance, the more difficult that it will be to reverse and correct the problem.

In my office, I see patients with all four phases of degeneration evident in their spine. The good news is that, with very few exception, all will achieve improved spinal function and related health benefits with spinal adjustments. Extensive training and years of experience allows me to provide safe and comfortable spinal adjustments to patients, even those with advanced spinal degeneration.

Chiropractic care allows your body to function more efficiently, and ultimately, to achieve better overall health. I am excited to have a role in making that possible!

Dr. Norman "Rick" Smith