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Healthy Concepts

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Natural Alternatives to Anti-Inflammatory Medications

If you've ever been in pain from an injured or overused joint you may have used pain relievers such as Advil, Motrin, Aleve, and Naprosyn. Generic names for some pain relievers include aspirin, ibuprofen, and naproxen. All these medications except for aspirin are called NSAIDs or "Non-Steroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drugs." They were developed years ago as an alternative to aspirin for pain relief because it was found that aspirin caused bleeding in the stomach and intestines. But, guess what – now they've discovered that the NSAIDs also cause bleeding! NSAIDs are meant to be taken only on a temporary basis (10 days or less). The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) warns against taking these medications improperly or for too long.

Acetaminophen (Tylenol, Datril) is another type of pain reliever. Too much acetaminophen causes liver damage. To learn more about what the FDA has to say about acetaminophen and NSAIDs, go to www.fda.gov/fdac/features/2003/103_pain.html.

NSAIDs (and many other drugs) work by inhibiting certain substances or chemical reactions in the body. The problems (side effects) that sometimes occur with drugs occur because the drugs are not specific. Not only do they have an effect on what they are trying to change, they have an effect on other things going on in the body that they were not targeted for. They imbalance the body in some way and sometimes your body can handle it and sometimes it can't.

Fortunately, there are other, safe alternatives for decreasing pain and inflammation, including chiropractic, CranioSacral Therapy, homeopathic remedies, herbal and enzyme preparations, and essential fatty acids.

Chiropractic adjustments decrease pain and pressure by realigning the joint(s)/spine and freeing up the nerves. CranioSacral Therapy rebalances fluids and reorganizes energy that has been disrupted. Homeopathic arnica reduces inflammation and bruising and relieves sore muscles. Certain herbal and enzyme preparations reduce pain and inflammation by eating up the debris in joints so that the fluid in the tissues can return to the bloodstream. Essential fatty acids are the building blocks of normally present substances in the body that reduce inflammation.

These natural alternatives often work better than their drug counterparts, healing tissue so that the pain goes away rather than masking pain and creating other imbalances. They can significantly reduce healing time especially when used early. They have also helped resolve old injuries that never fully healed. For example, I have seen CranioSacral Therapy work very quickly, reducing chronic pain to zero or a minimal amount in just one session.

If you'd like more information on how to alleviate pain naturally, contact Dr. Petrucci at (410) 880-4215, x104.

Triad of Health – Nutritional Aspect

As I've written previously in my newsletters, it's important to consider all aspects of the Triad of Health if you want to be your healthiest emotionally and physically.

Take, for example, headaches. Headaches are usually started when there's not enough oxygen-rich blood getting to the head. This can come from:

- too much worry (muscles tighten, chemicals are released)
- improper posture (nerves are pinched, less blood flows to the head)
- improper eating habits (blood contains too many toxins or not enough good quality nutrients).

Meditation, relaxation, and putting life into proper perspective can help prevent headaches brought on by worry (mental/emotional aspect). Using good posture, taking breaks from sitting at a computer, doing yoga, and exercising regularly can help prevent or decrease headaches brought on by improper posture (structural aspect). Eating more vegetables and less fried foods, eating small meals more often, or drinking more water may help reduce or eliminate headaches brought on by eating junk food, not getting enough fluids, or not eating frequently enough (nutritional aspect). Or, better yet, putting all these activities into practice will help insure balance on all sides of the Triad.

In addition to food, fluids, and food supplements, the nutritional/biochemical side of the Triad also includes biochemical processes of the body and anything taken in through the lungs or skin. Elimination of waste products is an important component. Toxins; poisons; poor quality air, water or food; pesticides; artificial additives; etc., contribute to the breakdown of health. They can interfere with normal biochemical processes of the body if ingested or absorbed in higher amounts than the body can manage.

If you would like a nutritional workup to see if changing your eating habits, adding food supplements to your daily routine, or doing an internal cleanse might help you feel better, please call me at (410) 880-4215, x104.

Also, for more information on the Triad of Health, you can read my article in the February Business Monthly at www.bizmonthly.com ("February 2007 Focus", 14th line).

Chiropractic Care: Helping to Restore Balance and Prevent Problems Down the Road

Not only is chiropractic care helpful after major injuries but it also works well in relieving aches and pains NOT brought on by accidents or injuries. Improper nutrition, posture, or lifting or overdoing certain activities can cause your body to be imbalanced and out of alignment. Here are some examples of things you might do on a daily, weekly, or occasional basis that can cause imbalance in your body:

- gardening
- lifting heavy groceries
- moving furniture around
- working every day at a computer
- standing or walking for a long time
- eating too many sweets, fats, junk food
- cleaning out overhead spaces like closets
- jogging on hard surfaces or in improper shoes
- playing sports after being inactive for a long time

Receiving chiropractic care or CranioSacral Therapy sooner rather than later after certain activities can help you feel better faster and heal properly. Taking care of the problem early before it becomes “set” also requires fewer treatments.

If you have not received chiropractic care in over a year, you may want to consider coming in for an appointment. You may have forgotten how good you can feel by getting a chiropractic adjustment, along with massage and heat packs. Also, please remember to exercise regularly, eat fresh foods especially fruits and vegetables, get plenty of rest, and fill your life with people and activities that help you feel good.

Dr. Petrucci is a chiropractor at HeartLight Healing Arts in Columbia, Maryland. She integrates various practices into her work with patients to help facilitate healing and well being. These include chiropractic, CranioSacral Therapy, massage, Applied Kinesiology, Contact Reflex Analysis, and nutritional recommendations. To make an appointment, call (410) 880-4215.