

OPTIMAL HEALTH UNIVERSITY™

Presented by Steven L. Smith, DC

Chiropractic: Drug-Free Asthma Prevention

Researchers theorize that asthma is associated with the presence of a spinal condition known as vertebral subluxation. This malady is characterized by areas in the spine where movement is restricted or bones (vertebrae) are slightly out of alignment. Chiropractors, like Dr. Smith correct vertebral subluxations and restore motion and alignment to the spine with gentle maneuvers called chiropractic adjustments.

Studies suggest that chiropractic adjustments may ward off asthma. But how? Dr. Smith wants patients to know about exciting research that points to a biochemical link. Read on to learn more.



Chiropractic Adjustments May Trigger Biochemical Changes

Chiropractic adjustments may trigger biochemical changes that boost immune function, alleviate asthma symptoms — and prevent future attacks.

For instance, research presented at the International Conference on Spinal Manipulation in Toronto tracked 420 asthma patients at 16 treatment centers in Australia. The average age of the patients was 46.

Information was collected regarding the patients' general health status, as well as symptoms of asthma, depression and anxiety. The patients then underwent different forms of manual therapy, such as chiropractic or massage. A control group was also established.

Before and after the therapy, blood tests were conducted to measure a specific marker of immune function known as immunoglobulin A (IgA). Blood was also tested for the hormone cortisol, which is associated with stress and decreased immune function.

Results revealed that only the group receiving chiropractic care experienced significant improvement in asthma symptoms. They also scored

lower on assessments of depression and anxiety, compared with pre-treatment scores.

In addition, patients who received chiropractic care had significant boosts in IgA levels and significant drops in cortisol levels.

Another study supports the notion that chiropractic adjustments improve the immune response.

The analysis included 74 healthy people. Some of the study participants received chiropractic adjustments, while others received a placebo treatment. Blood samples were cultured and tested for two markers of immune function known as immunoglobulin G (IgG) and immunoglobulin M (IgM).

Findings showed a significant increase in IgG and IgM in cultures from individuals who received chiropractic adjustments that produced “popping” sounds (cavitation). These increases were not seen in cultures from people who underwent placebo treatment (*Chiropr Osteopat* 2010;18:26).

Research Supports Chiropractic

Dr. Smith is interested in research supporting that chiropractic care may benefit patients with asthma.

For instance, one report published in the *Journal of the Canadian Chiropractic Association* pooled data from eight studies on chiropractic care for asthma.

Investigators found that chiropractic care improves asthma. “It is evident that some asthmatic patients may benefit from this treatment approach; however, at this time, the evidence suggests chiropractic care should be used as an adjunct, not a replacement, to traditional medical therapy.” (*J Can Chiropr Assoc* 2010;54:24-32.)

Another study evaluated 36 youngsters with asthma, ages 6 to 17 years. The study participants had 23 chiropractic visits over a 12-week period. One group received chiropractic adjustments, while a control group received placebo treatments.

Chiropractic patients reported 20 percent less-frequent use of their bronchodilator. They also reported that their quality of life rose by 10 to 28 percent. In addition, asthma severity ratings fell by 39 percent. These results remained constant during a one-year follow-up period (*J Manipulative Physiol Ther* 2001;24:369-77).

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Another study enrolled 81 children with asthma. After two months of chiropractic care, 90 percent of subjects reported a significant improvement in quality of life.

The study concluded that “chiropractic care, for the correction of vertebral subluxation, is a safe non-pharmacologic health-care approach which may also be associated with significant decrease in asthma related impairment as well as a decreased incidence of asthmatic attacks.” (*J Vertebr Sublux Res* 1997;1:41-8.)

Finally, another study followed the case of a 7-year-old boy who suffered from chronic colds, allergies and asthma since the age of 5 months. He was taking daily prescription medicine for allergies (Alavert®) and asthma (albuterol).

His illness caused him to miss one to two days of school each month and required monthly visits to his medical doctor.

According to the report “within two weeks of initiating chiropractic care, the patient was able to discontinue his allergy and asthma medications (as decided upon by his parents) and the use of his nebulizer. In the first 5 months after beginning chiropractic care, he has had only wellness check-ups at the medical doctor. In the past school year, the patient has not missed any days of school due to illness.” (*J Ped Mat Fam Health* 2009;3:1-7.)

Another Way Chiropractic Helps

Here’s another way chiropractic care helps prevent asthma: Regular chiropractic adjustments keep aches and pains at bay, in turn eliminating the need for pain medications, many of which significantly up the risk of asthma.

Even infrequent use of the seemingly benign over-the-counter drug acetaminophen (Tylenol®) dramatically raises an individual’s odds of developing asthma.

A review study by researchers at the University of British Columbia in

Vancouver pooled data on 19 studies conducted between 1966 and 2008. The analysis, which included 425,140 people, found that the risk of asthma jumped by 60 percent in children who took acetaminophen in the year prior to being diagnosed. Adults who reported taking the medication were 74 percent more likely to have asthma (*CHEST* 2009;136:1316-23).

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More Asthma-Fighting Facts

Children whose mothers took acetaminophen (Tylenol®) while pregnant have a 30 percent heightened risk of asthma and a 50 percent bolstered risk of wheezing (*CHEST* 2009;136:1316-23).

According to a study of over 24,000 women, pregnant women who take antibiotics increase the risk of their children having asthma by 43 percent (*GP* 2002:4).

Consuming apples and omega-3 rich fish during pregnancy significantly decreases the odds of having a child who develops asthma (*Thorax* 2007;62:772-8).

Cesarean section delivery may predispose infants to developing asthma (*American Academy of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology*).

Babies breastfed exclusively for the first four months of life have a 27 percent reduced risk of developing asthma (*American Lung Association*).

Studies in mice show that repeated exposure to disposable diapers significantly increases the risk of asthma-associated breathing problems (*Arch Environ Health* 1999;54:353-8).

Children raised in a home with two or more dogs/cats during their infancy have 45 percent lower rates of respiratory hyper-reactivity, a significant risk factor for asthma (*JAMA* 2002;288:963-72).

Exposure to cigarette smoke skyrockets an individual’s risk of asthma.

A study of 445 youngsters found that those who received antibiotics during the first year of life were 2.5 times more likely to develop asthma by age seven (*European Respiratory Society*).

“Exposure to chemically based cleaning products could account for as much as 15 percent, or one in seven of adult asthma cases.” (*Am J Respir Crit Care Med* 2007;176:735-41.)

Exposure to “off-gassing” from new plastic products, furniture, paint and other items boosts the risk of asthma (*Environ Res* 2006;102:1-8).

Overweight boys have approximately twice the risk of asthma, compared with thinner boys. Overweight girls have 1.5 times the risk.

A diet rich in a wide array of fruits and vegetables prevents asthma. Children with diets low in vegetables and vitamin E are almost three times as likely to suffer asthma symptoms (*Thorax* 2000;55:775-9).

Exposure to pesticides significantly boosts a person’s risk of asthma.

Children who eat fresh, oily fish at least once per week were much less likely to develop asthma (*Med J Aust* 1996;164:137-40).