

Taking Care Of Your Child's Spine

Unbeknownst to most parents, the birth process may have been a stressful/traumatic event for their child. In a study done by Dr. Gutmann¹ on 200 babies in 1990, 95% of babies have a misalignment in the first bone of their neck on the day of birth. A baby's spine can also be subjected to stresses prior to being born, as the baby may be in a less than ideal position in the mother's uterus.



We cannot deny that first time parents usually do not have the best skills or knowledge when it comes to handling a baby. While we can do our best and be as cautious as we can while handling our baby, we may unknowingly add more stresses into their spine. The following are some tips that may be useful for parents to take care for their child's spine:

❑ When lifting your baby, always support the back and neck with your hands. Pick up your older child by grasping the body under the arm.

❑ Avoid using a bouncer as this can cause unnecessary stress and even a fracture in their spine if your child's spine is not properly developed.

❑ Do not put your baby in a walker before he/she is ready to walk. This can subject their lower back to unnecessary stress and even cause a fracture when they are not ready for the force of gravity.

❑ Do not throw your child up in the air as this can cause a whiplash injury to their fragile neck.

❑ When changing diaper, refrain from lifting their legs and hips up too high as this bending action can introduce unhealthy stress into their spine and cause misalignments.

❑ Provide your child a bed that is firm.

❑ Make sure that your child has a well-balanced diet.

❑ Inculcate good postural habits. Correct them when you see them slouch. Cultivate a healthy habit before it becomes difficult to correct.

❑ Schedule a regular spine check-up with a chiropractor to make sure that your child's spine is develop-

ing properly and their ability to grow to their optimal potential is not stifled.

Many developmental milestones such as learning to hold up the head, sitting upright, crawling, and walking, are all activities that can be affected by misalignments in the spine. Additionally, falls, sports injuries, heavy school bags and sitting all day in the classroom are all physical stresses to the growing child's spine and nervous system. It can be difficult for a parent to recognize when a child's spine is not working correctly, unless a child has an obvious problem.

However, there are some signs which can indicate problems in their spines and these include; limited head or neck movement to one side, uneven shoulders, disturbed sleeping patterns and breastfeeding difficulties at a very young age.

Unlike adults, babies are unable to express discomforts or stresses in the spines verbally. The most convenient way for them to do that is to cry. Regardless what a baby's crying may mean, it may be a best to bring your baby to a chiropractor to have his or her spine assessed.

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Use an approved car seat that supports your child's head and neck.