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Maximizing Your Health Potential **By: Dr. Stephen O'Neil**

Dear Dr. Steve: When should someone go to a chiropractor? My friend says I should go to a chiropractor, but I don't have any back pain? S.B. Belle River

Dr. Steve: People go to a chiropractor for many different reasons. The number one reason people come through my door is for some sort of injury or ailment, which usually involves pain. It is true that we help the body heal and can help people manage their pain and other symptoms. However, there is much more to the practice of chiropractic and in fact chiropractic was never designed to manage symptoms or treat back pain.

Chiropractic was founded on the basis that the central nervous system controls and directs every other function of the body. Therefore by influencing the nervous system, we can affect every other aspect of our body and being. We all place stress on our bodies and systems on a daily basis, in the form of physical stress, chemical stress, or mental / emotional stress. The central nervous system is directly responsible for dealing with these stressors, while maintaining health and balance in our body. The stress of daily life has negative effects on the body which accumulate over time. These stressors can often become too much for the nervous system to handle and some part of the system becomes out of balance. This may come in the form of physical breakdown, i.e. I have tendonitis in my shoulder from working on the assembly line; chemical breakdown, i.e. I can't get going in the morning without some caffeine; or mental / emotional breakdown, i.e. I cannot cope with the stress at work or of a poor relationship.

The bottom line is that the nervous system needs some help to maintain balance within our bodies and maintain health. In order for the nervous system to maintain health, it must be able to easily and effectively communicate with the rest of the body. This is where chiropractic comes in. Chiropractors align the vertebrae in the spine and restore proper motion to the vertebral joints to relieve pressure on the spinal nerves. By removing this interference, the brain is better able to communicate with the rest of the body. The nervous system can then express itself freely and optimal health can be achieved. So to answer your original question, there are several reasons to see your chiropractor, but going only when you have pain is like waiting until your car starts smoking and then bringing it in for an oil change. The damage has been done and it may be tough to correct. The same is true for your spine and your nervous system. Regular adjustments can help maintain and more importantly, prevent extra, more costly damage from being done.

Chiropractic not only helps the body heal itself and better deal with the stresses of daily life, but it can improve all aspects of your overall health. Preventing disease is always smarter than waiting for a breakdown and then trying to fix it. See your Chiropractor for a spinal and nervous system analysis and get on the road to maximizing your potential.