



Discover Chiropractic

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Why Infants Need Chiropractic Care

It is common to get strange looks from people I talk to about taking infants to the chiropractor. I know what is going through their heads: Is it safe? Babies don't have back pain. Do babies get adjusted the same way I do? These are legitimate concerns for any parent, but to answer them I will begin with the most important question: Why?

Being born is tough work. There are a lot of pressures and forces being exerted onto your baby during her journey into the world. A recent study by Viola Frymann demonstrated that 90 percent of newborns suffered the effects of birth trauma: associated strain through the neck and cranial areas following birth. Frymann, an American osteopathic doctor, studied more than 1,500 babies periodically across an eight-year period. She examined all babies within the first five days of birth; in fact, many were checked within the first 24 hours of birth. This study revealed that approximately:

- Only 10 percent of the newborn babies had perfect, freely mobile skulls or cranial mechanisms.
- As many as 10 percent had severe trauma to the head, evident even to untrained observers.
- The remaining 80 percent all had some strain patterns in the cranial mechanism.

Left uncorrected, this trauma continues to impact a baby's spinal growth and development, reducing the healthy function of her nervous



Photo Courtesy of Jamie Siever Photography

system later in life, which could easily have been prevented.

Birth Trauma

Birth, in its many different forms, can be quite traumatic. While each birth is unique, there is always a chance that the baby suffers some sort of strain, due to a variety of reasons. Even the most natural births can result in trauma that goes undetected. As researcher G. Gutmann has written, "The trauma from the birth process remains an underpublicized and therefore significantly under-treated problem."

What can cause birth trauma?

Very short labor, very long labor, failure of the cervix to dilate, use of Pitocin to strengthen/induce uterine contractions, use of forceps or vacuum extraction, or cord around baby's neck. Cesarean

Evidence

Beyond the Frymann study detailed above, a Harvard University pathologist, Dr. Abraham Towbin, found evidence of spinal injury common as a result of the birthing process. He also found evidence of spinal injury in many cases of SIDS and infant respiratory conditions.

Birth trauma often causes neurological dysfunction. In fact, a study by Gutmann examining more than 1,000 infants concluded that approximately 80 percent had some form of nerve dysfunction. This is of utmost importance, since 65 percent of neurological development (brain and nervous system) occurs in a child's first year. During this crucial time, it is vital that the nervous system be healthy so the child can grow and develop to her potential.

What can nerve dysfunction from birth trauma lead to?

Respiratory dysfunction

Digestive disorders

Irritability

Difficulty nursing (impaired sucking, swallowing or head positions)

Balance issues

Sleeping difficulty

Delayed developmental milestones

Chiropractic maximizes our potential for well-being.

-Cole Bradburn, D.C. This article appeared in *Pathways to Family Wellness* magazine, Issue #50.

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