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## Kids find a new way to adjust: Chiropractors

Updated 1/19/2009 12:53 PM | Comments **46** | Recommend **20** | E-mail | Save | Print | Reprints & Permissions | [RSS](#)



**Your Health**  
Kim Painter

By **Kim Painter, USA TODAY**

Melanie Booth never expected to take her baby to a chiropractor. But when son Mac was 3 months old and having problems — difficulty with nursing, apparent discomfort when lying on his tummy and a tendency to turn his head only one way — his pediatrician recommended she do just that.

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Booth, a university professor in Portland, Ore., found that her lactation consultant and several friends also endorsed chiropractic care for kids.

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After one visit, she was a believer, too: As chiropractor Elise Hewitt worked on Mac, "he began to quiver and shake, and it kind of scared my husband and me," Booth says. "But she explained (she) was releasing energy that was stored up incorrectly in his body and particularly his spine. ... And almost immediately, we saw a change in his ability to move his neck." The nursing and tummy time problems cleared up, too, Booth says, as Mac continued treatments over several months.

Stories such as Booth's help explain why nearly 3% of children in the USA were treated with chiropractic or osteopathic manipulation in 2007, making it the second-most common form of complementary or alternative medicine for children, a government report said recently. (Most common: natural products, such as fish oil and herbs.)

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But stories are not studies. Even practitioners such as Hewitt, president of the American Chiropractic Association's council on pediatrics, concede their work is not backed by the kinds of studies that would be required if chiropractic care were a drug. As the government report noted, "there is insufficient proof that (alternative practices) are safe and effective." The National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine, which released the report, was created to fill the research gap.

Chiropractors say they welcome the scrutiny. Hewitt says: "I wish there were more high-level studies." But she also says she is comfortable treating kids based on preliminary research, 100 years of chiropractic history and her own experiences.

**Harm is 'rare, but possible'**

One large safety review, published in 2007, did find a few serious injuries in children, including one death from a brain bleed and one case of paralysis. But there was no proof spinal manipulation caused the injuries and no way to estimate how common such injuries might be, says Sunita Vohra of the University of Alberta in Edmonton, Canada.

"Serious harms may be rare but are possible," she says. She is working on further studies.

"I suspect that adverse events are very rare," says Kathi Kemper, professor of pediatrics at Wake Forest University School of Medicine in Winston-Salem, N.C. She wouldn't refer a child to a chiropractor for non-musculoskeletal problems but



[Enlarge](#) [Handout](#)  
Pediatric chiropractor Elise Hewitt of Portland, Ore., works on a young patient.

### WHAT DO CHIROPRACTORS DO?

The most common therapy is spinal manipulation: The chiropractor uses hands to apply controlled force to joints in an effort to relieve inflammation, pain and muscle tightness. Advocates say manipulating the spine, skull or other body parts also can relieve irritated nerves causing symptoms elsewhere. Those who treat children say they use a very gentle touch. Similar therapies sometimes are performed by osteopathic physicians, physical therapists and others.

**What training do chiropractors have?**  
All have four years of professional study; some have additional training in pediatrics or other specialties. All states license chiropractors, and many insurers cover their services.

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wouldn't ask parents to stop visits if they perceive benefits.

Word-of-mouth, not research, brings most parents to Jeanne Ohm, a chiropractor in Media, Pa., and executive coordinator of the International Chiropractic Pediatric Association. Parents "are usually referred by someone whose asthma went away or whose ear infections went away," she says.

Ohm says she does not promise to cure any ailment in a particular child. She emphasizes broader goals: "Taking stress and tension off the nervous system affects their whole physical body and their mental state. We look at the whole person."

**READERS: Have you or would you take your child to a chiropractor? Share your opinions and experiences below:**

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Posted 1/18/2009 4:08 PM

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[mommymuse](#) wrote: 2d 18h ago

Pediatric chiropractic care was an absolute lifesaver for me and my first daughter. A lactation consultant recommended I see Dr. Elise Hewitt of Portland, OR for my infant's latch problems, which made a world of difference. 7 years later, I was able to share this story on the air as host of "The Mommy-Muse Is In: Empowering Your Journey into Motherhood" on the VoiceAmerica.com Healthy & Wellness Network. Listen to the archive through the tiny link here: <http://tiny.cc/babychiro>

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[zerocho](#) wrote: 2d 19h ago

[applejacks](#) wrote: 43m ago

Todd's comments echo mine. Chiropractic treatment addresses a symptom but does NOT address the underlying problem that is causing the symptoms. This is great for the chiropractors (as they build a steady repeat business) but not so great for you and your wallet. Of course in this quick fix society no one wants to take the time or make the effort for the proper physical therapy, exercise, ect. necessary for long term relief.

The goal of a chiropractor is to see you once per week/month forever. The goal of a physical therapist is to cure your symptoms for good as quickly as possible so you no longer need to pay for treatment.

You must be a Physical Therapist or have one very close to you. You do not understand Chiropractic, in fact you have it backwards. Chiropractic looks for the underlying problem, to get rid of the cause(s) of the symptom(s). Please explain how an adjustment, actual physical adjustment is addressing pain. Pain is the body telling you something is wrong. If your complaint is numbness in the hands, tell me how you adjust numbness? Numbness being the symptom. Seems to me applejacks that you don't understand what a symptom is. If the Chiropractic adjustment offers nothing then why do they offer PT's a weekend seminar on how to adjust. Probably because it doesn't work right (insert sarcasm where necessary). Which by the way is probably more dangerous than anything. Would you rather have some one, who after earning a 4 year bachelor's degree, and then three years of education becoming a Doctor of Chiropractic, whose sole goal is to be a Dr. of the nervous system, and learn as much anatomy and physiology as every other MD...would you want them taking care of your spine, or a PT who learned how to adjust on a Saturday and half a Sunday? That choice is easy. So I guess applejacks back it up with something substantial, not your misunderstanding of symptoms.

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[mirv22](#) wrote: 1/22/2009 1:53:56 PM

I was initially a little skeptical of chiropractic care for my 8 week old baby. She was so terribly fussy and unsettled, with reflux and other issues that we couldn't figure out. We tried reflux medication, but it only introduced other issues that caused her discomfort. Not to mention the fact that I didn't feel comfortable giving my tiny daughter such strong meds. A friend of mine suggested chiropractic care, so I gave it a shot. After only one visit, it made a world of difference in my daughter. I continue to take her on periodic basis to keep her aligned and healthy. I would recommend chiropractic care to anyone whose child is having health issues. It has truly been a huge blessing.

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**WILLIAM RISLEY** wrote: 1/20/2009 10:26:41 AM

As a 40 year practicing chiropractic doctor, I will take an oath subject to perjury, if anyone questions the truth of these comments. Patient number 1: 4 psychomotor epilepsy seizures per day for 40 years +. Several adjustments, this patient then went 2.5 years without another seizure, absent, mind numbing medication. Does this treatment work? Don't ever let anyone tell you it does not. Especially Big Pharma and the AMA, with their lackeys.

Patient # 2, myocardial infarction in-office. My partner called 911, administered an adjustment. When the paramedics arrived, patient was sitting comfortably, enjoying a cup of coffee, talking with the staff. Does this science work? You bet.

All we do is insure normal nerve supply to the body, from the brain, and only the body can fix the problem permanently. Some times drugs are necessary, but in reality, those drugs are rarely the answer, commonly more of a problem. Recent study at U of Chicago Med. Cntr= 25 high blood pressure patients had 1 adjustment only, reducing B/P to a level which was a greater improvement than any 2 drugs would do! Statistician did not believe it, and rechecking stats found them to be correct. Don't ever think that chiropractic care doesn't work. Do we have our failures? Of course, but far, far less than conventional medicine. Times are changing for the better. An old friend once told me the day will come, when all hospital patients will be first given chiropractic evaluation and care, prior to meds and surgery. I didn't believe him, but it would be the best scenario. Medicine is guilty of hubris. They have painted themselves into God-like status. No one can cure anything except an MD, and our gross national product cost for medical care is 16.5% . No wonder we have a deepening recession! Do yourself a favor. If you have an ailment, first try this type of care. you will likely be thrilled with the result, and not likely drugged or harmed.

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**Bshoot03** wrote: 1/20/2009 9:53:46 AM

When I was 6 years old, i was taking a handful of pills every morning for asthma, allergies and kidney problems that came from the side effects of the meds. Each year I was getting worse. We had the "best" M.D.s money could buy. We went to specialists of all kinds each with a new drug of choice or breathing machine. Whenever I got off any of the meds, I came down with pneumonia and every thing else. IS THIS WHAT SOCIETY CALLS SCIENTIFICALLY PROVEN TREATMENT? Scientifically, I was sick, and the meds not only cured nothing, but got me sicker.

How many kids/people do you know that when they quit taking "scientifically" proven medicines that their symptoms come back?

A chiropractor relieved pressure on my central nervous system...which scientifically controls every thing in both mine and your bodies. I had a birth trauma that left my head sitting on my spine crooked thus contorting my upper spinal cord. How could a body possibly operate at 100% that way?

The chiropractor didn't treat my disease...they treated the cause. We didn't try a chiropractor until I was 13....this was 13 years late! My current chiropractor sees more babies and children than adults...my kids love it, they are exceedingly healthy, never miss school with illness and have never even seen a pediatrician. Maximizedliving chiropractic is the way to go.

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**FergusVI** wrote: 1/19/2009 10:55:55 PM

This is the state of the pharmaceutical-medical complex.

Hysterical short video.

<http://www.mercola.com/townofalopath/index.htm>

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**NewzReader** wrote: 1/19/2009 9:41:26 PM

ocdshark wrote: 3h 48m ago

Chiropractic is not a science, any more than the postulates of Evolution is a science. Both are largely based on guesswork. But Chiropractic is much nearer to a science than the other.

\*Lol\* ... even for Mr. Darwin 150 years ago, it was hardly "guesswork".

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**ocdshark** wrote: 1/19/2009 5:50:52 PM

Chiropractic is not a science, any more than the postulates of Evolution is a science. Both are largely based on guesswork. But Chiropractic is much nearer to a science than the other.

And, I would hesitate to take a small child to be stretched and pressed upon by a chiropractor. Unless I felt secure that the Chiropractor was among those who has a reputation and a knack of giving relief to CHILDREN.

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**The Mick** wrote: 1/19/2009 3:08:01 PM

applejacks wrote: 43m ago

Todd's comments echo mine. Chiropractic treatment addresses a symptom but does NOT address the underlying problem that is causing the symptoms. This is great for the chiropractors (as they build a steady repeat business) but not so great for you and your wallet. Of course in this quick fix society no one wants to take the time or make the effort for the proper physical therapy, exercise, ect. necessary for long term relief.

The goal of a chiropractor is to see you once per week/month forever. The goal of a physical therapist is to cure your symptoms for good as quickly as possible so you no longer need to pay for treatment.

=====

Not true.

I saw a chiropractor for one month for numbness in an arm due to a cervical pinched nerve and he said, "Mickey, we're spinning our wheels. Here are two surgeons I recommend. See one of them." I was then operated on successfully.

I also know of people who saw chiropractors for manipulation and it permanently relieved pain.

I do agree that physical therapy has it's place, too. In fact, after I had one Achilles tendon operated on, the same doctor refused to operate on the other and instead sent me to a physical therapist who corrected what had become a muscle-imbalance problem.

When I coached high school sports, a physical therapy company volunteered to come to our school and do range of motion measurements on our athletes before the season started. As a result, when a kid was injured, an immediate estimate of its severity could be estimated because we had baseline measurements on every athlete. Too bad that's not true everywhere.

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**JFirstDogonDog** wrote: 1/19/2009 2:42:08 PM

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: July 09, 2008

ACA Targets 16,000 Neurologists with Latest Research on Neck Pain

The American Chiropractic Association (ACA) today announced it has mailed copies of a report issued by the Task Force on Neck Pain and its Associated Disorders to more than 16,600 neurologists across the country. The seven-year, international, multidisciplinary study was published in the journal *Spine* and is designed to help health professionals apply the best available evidence to prevent, diagnose and manage neck pain.

In the cover letter accompanying the study, ACA President Glenn Manceaux, DC, noted that ACA encourages evidence-based clinical practice and interprofessional cooperation in patient care. "There is growth in the referral of patients between chiropractors and neurologists and therefore, it is important that all practitioners be on the same page regarding the most current research in treating this pervasive condition," Dr. Manceaux said.

In distributing the study findings, ACA worked closely with NCMIC, the nation's leading provider of chiropractic malpractice insurance for doctors of chiropractic.

The Bone and Joint Decade 2000-2010 Task Force on Neck Pain and its Associated Disorders considered almost 32,000 citations and performed critical appraisals of more than 1,000 studies in developing its 236-page report. The Task Force is an independent research group recognized by the United Nations and the World Health Organization.

Task Force researchers found that some alternative therapies such as acupuncture, neck manipulation and massage are better choices for managing most common neck pain than many current practices. Also included in the short-list of best options for relief are exercises, education, neck mobilization, low-level laser therapy and pain relievers.

In addition to its comprehensive review of the existing body of research on neck pain, the Task Force also initiated a new population-based, case-control and case-crossover study into the association between chiropractic care and vertebral artery (VBA) stroke. This Canadian study investigated associations between chiropractic visits and vertebral artery stroke and compared this with visits to primary care physicians and the occurrence of VBA stroke.

\*\*\*\*\*

The study — which analyzed a total of 818 cases of VBA stroke admitted to Ontario hospitals over a 9-year period (more than 100 million patient-years of observation) — concluded that VBA stroke is a very rare event and that the risk of VBA stroke associated with a visit to a chiropractor's office appears to be \*\*\*no different from the risk of VBA stroke following a visit to a family physician's office.\*\*\*

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