

rarely the result of a single event. The vulnerable lower back is subject to constant stress. An accident, twisting fall, or too much exercise can set off

“Remember that the brain controls, monitors and regulates all bodily functions. Upper cervical interference can affect any area from the top of the head to the bottom of the feet.” Dr. Matthew Allen, Stillwater, OK.

pain. It’s mechanical in nature and with treatment, usually resolves in a week or so. Pain can also be caused by illness or infection and aggravated by emotions or stress.

“One of the biggest mistakes people make in treating back pain is applying heat instead of ice,” said Spitz. Ice reduces swelling and is applied in most treatments.

Another mistake is waiting too long to seek help. Tissues become swollen and scar tissue develops, making it harder for the body to respond to treatment.

“If the pain is due to a strained or sprained muscle we start treatment with modalities such as muscle stimulation, icing, or ultrasound to relax muscles, then make adjustments,” says Barry.

WIDENING THE GAP

The discs are cushions between the vertebrae. Injury or degeneration allows the soft mass at the center, the nucleus pulposus, to bulge outside. It eventually compresses nerves that pass between the vertebrae causing low back pain and numbness.

“Chiropractic uses a variety of techniques to move a bone to restore movement as quickly and painlessly as possible,” says Spitz. “Traditionally that technique is hands-on, but some chiropractors use instruments.”

Torn fibers or escaped fragments from a herniated disc may directly irritate or compress a nerve. “Often chiropractic adjustment can save someone from surgery,” Spitz adds.

BACK ON TRACK

Barry says that treatment eventually

moves into low-tech rehabilitation, sometimes utilizing elastic exercise bands or balls. He recommends exercise to strengthen or stretch lower back, leg

and abdominal muscles.

Chiropractic treatment includes preventive instruction. “Most of our patients are 35-50 years old. It’s a time of life when people are busy, highly stressed and not getting enough exercise,” says Barry. He teaches proper body mechanics for standing, bending, and sleeping to correct the kind of mistakes that patients make every day that cause problems to recur. Corrective postural exercises can be done throughout the day. An individual that sits at a computer can stretch and bend

backwards, to lengthen the spine and restore the spine’s natural curve, he suggests.

WELLNESS CARE

“After the cause of low back pain is corrected, we teach patients how to develop better habits of exercise and nutrition and encourage regular chiropractic checkups to maintain good health,” says Spitz.

Barry concurs. **“Regular chiropractic care is essential to the body’s overall wellness. Instead of waiting until pain signals a problem, patients can maintain alignment with regular adjustments.**

Vertebrae that are aligned do not degenerate as rapidly. I have gotten adjusted every 3-6 weeks for years. I’m amazed when I see someone that has not had the benefit of adjustment. I wonder how they manage.”

