



Chiropractic Miracles

Delivering You the Best Word in Wellness and Natural Health Care

Dr. Bennett's Breakthrough Patient Newsletter...

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Dear Patient and Friend,

Chances are if you have children of school age, you've heard about or participated in scoliosis screenings. Abnormal spinal curvature can be a serious health problem, and early detection can make a big difference in the health and life of the child.

But why is a healthy spine important in the first place? In addition to giving you structure, a way to hold yourself upright and give your muscles and limbs a place to attach to, the spine also plays the essential role of protecting the delicate wiring and control system of your body, the nerve system.

The brain is inside the skull, and the spinal cord is inside the spine, where it can be housed safely, as long as the bones are in proper alignment, minimizing wear and tear on the structure and the control system. Chiropractic adjustments relieve brain stress, and improve vitality and quality of life.

Just like in your home, faulty wiring is inefficient and even dangerous – so keeping your spine healthy, or noticing when it begins to be unhealthy, is one of the best things you can do, not only for kids, but for the entire family.

If you want to be as healthy as possible, get seasonal checkups from your doctor of chiropractic – he or she is your neighborhood spinal specialist, and you're worth it.

Which foods are best and worst for learning?

These days everyone is talking about how to have a healthy brain. It turns out that the best way to keep your brain healthy is to develop certain habits, where you handle physical, chemical and emotional stress.

Chiropractic care and exercise usually handles the physical stress, while massage, meditation, prayer or yoga often takes care of the emotional stress.

But what can we do about chemical and nutritional stress on your brain and nerve system? How can we give your body the building blocks it needs to function at its best? What should we feed our kids (or ourselves) before exams, when studying, when learning, when trying to get the most out of our mental power?

Here are seven guidelines to help you feed your brain better.

1. Make sure to eat. And drink. Your brain needs fuel, and what you eat turns into your brain's energy source. You need a regular intake of good quality foods, balancing proteins with fats and carbohydrates. Include several glasses of water in your daily fluid intake, especially in the warmer months when you have a tendency to perspire. Pay attention to what you eat when you study or take a test, and see which foods make you sharper and which make you dull. That experience is a first step toward feeding your brain for peak learning and performance.

2. Pick brain-enriching foods. Your brain loves proteins and fats, like eggs, nuts, avocados, yogurt, fish, berries, sunflower seeds, and dried fruits, like figs and prunes. Your brain also likes fruits and vegetables like melons, oranges, bananas, beans, carrots, peppers, spinach and broccoli. Include foods that are high in Omega-3 fatty acids, such as oily cold-water fish like salmon, herring and sardines, as well as vegetable sources like walnuts and flax seeds. And the anti-oxidants in dark fruits and vegetables aid in cognition and memory – in other words, they make you think better. Try some blueberries, or some pomegranate juice, they'll turbo-charge your brain. And you can supplement with a good organic multivitamin – your brain loves B-vitamins. And believe it or not, your brain loves dark chocolate but you can only eat a little. Enjoy!

3. Avoid brain-clouding foods. Stay away from refined carbohydrates, like white flour baked goods such as cookies, cakes or muffins. Reduce or eliminate refined sugar treats, like candy, chocolates and desserts. These foods will spike your energy, and

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you risk crashing when you should be working or testing. Also, eating too much potatoes or rice can make you feel sleepy, as would turkey, which is high in the amino acid tryptophan, so those foods are not to be eaten on test day or when you are studying for long periods.

4. Drink brain-supporting beverages, and avoid brain-draining drinks. Your brain loves water, and one of the most common issues with brain function is dehydration, which may make you feel faint or lose concentration – this is easily handled by simply drinking water before you get too thirsty. Tea is okay, but not if you load it up with sugar. The worst offenders are alcohol and sugary drinks like soda. Some people get sharper with a little caffeine, while others are bothered by it – test and see what works best for you or your child. If you are used to drinking coffee, go easy but don't cut it out entirely, as this might cause some withdrawal symptoms. Use common sense.

5. Eat light. You want your energy in your mind, not in your digestive organs. And stay away from new foods you haven't eaten before, since you don't know how your mind and body will react – avoid surprises that could irritate you. Overeating prior to studying or testing may rob you of sharpness and focus. Too much food or heavy, fried or overly sweet or salty foods may all detract from your mental acuity. Choose a lighter fare and you're more likely to perform well.

6. Snack wisely. Loading up on sweets could cause a crash at an inopportune time. Chips or salty foods can dehydrate you, or just direct your energy into your gut to digest these foods when you should have your energy ready to think and problem-solve. You may find that eating less suits your needs, but if you are going to eat, pick healthy snacks like protein bars, trail mix, almonds or fruit – stay away from candy bars and other sweets that will foul up your energy chemistry and stress you out.

7. Get sufficient sleep. This isn't really a nutritional recommendation, but to get the most out of the good nutritional decisions you are making, your brain chemistry has to be tuned up every day. Your brain cleans itself out and replenishes itself while you sleep, and it takes about seven hours to complete the process – so, be sure to get at least seven or eight hours before you study or take a test. Not only will you feel refreshed, but your brain will work better and your performance will improve.

Learning how to take proper care of your brain and body will reward you with a lifetime of better health and quality of life. These habits are easy enough to learn – now it only takes a decision and you can be on your way to a healthier brain.

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Watch Out For Heavy Backpacks!

Take a snapshot of a bunch of kids walking home from school, and many or most will be carrying knapsacks on their backs. But if you look more closely, you'll see that each of them has to assume a different distorted posture to handle the weight.

Some will be leaning forward, taking the heaviest part on their backs, unbalancing them from back to front. Some will carry it off to one side, on one shoulder or one hip, unbalancing them from left to right. Some may move it around, unable to get comfortable with it in any position for too long.

All of this unbalanced posture, especially with a heavy weight suspended from the child's body, creates great wear and tear, and risks more serious injury. If you can, help your child decide which books must be in their bags, and which could be left in school or at home. If possible, especially for lighter weight kids, consider a rolling bag, if you can find one your kid will tolerate.

But one way or another, you need to find a way to decrease the stress of carrying a backpack. Rest periods, balancing between two smaller sacks, or choosing carefully what to put in the knapsack are only a few of the many ways of increasing backpack safety.

Above all, if your child is going to carry a backpack, get periodic checkups at your family chiropractic office. Your chiropractor can tell you if the knapsack is hurting your child, and what to do about it.

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