



Lightstreams Chiropractic Care Pte. Ltd.

Lucky Plaza #05-54B, 304 Orchard Road, T: 6738 0605, F: 6738 5750,

admin@lightstreamschiropractic.com

www.lightstreamschiropractic.com

Chiropractic Health Care, your partner in Wellness

Dr. Nancy Anne Schrauth, D.C. (USA)

Taking care of your body is the best way to ensure a long, healthy and productive life. Whether your spine and joints, or your immune system, your heart, kidneys or any part of your body, there are many things you can do to prevent discomfort and disease and promote wellness. A Doctor of Chiropractic (DC), is trained to assess and correct structural and functional problems. A DC can help you understand how your body works and teach you how to develop a strategy for long term wellness. Once you understand how to keep your body healthy, you can make choices that will lead you to a life of awareness, wellness and vitality. A chiropractor who is committed to empower you can be your valued partner in a life-long program of wellness.

Wellness requires a holistic approach, making sure all aspects of your being are attended to, body, mind and spirit. The aches and pains you feel in your body can be an indication of a posture problem, a gastric problem or the fact that you hate your job, and likely it is a combination of all three! Listening to your body's wisdom will give you all the clues you need to assist your body to thrive. Given the right environment, your body knows how to maintain health and wellness without any intervention or effort on your part. You are empowered take charge of your health when you know how to listen to your body's wisdom and apply what you intuitively know is right.

Chiropractic health care

Chiropractic adjustments are one way of bringing your body back into balance and drawing your awareness to your body's wisdom. When your spine is misaligned, the delicate nerves between the vertebrae become irritated, muscles and tissues in the area become tight, inflamed and painful. A DC can detect the area of the spine that is misaligned or not functional and correct it. When your spine and joints are aligned and moving with ease and comfort, your nervous system is able to communicate your body's wisdom to all the tissues and cells in your body.

Your posture for example, can greatly affect how well your body functions. If you are slouching over a desk all day, your spine is compressed in various locations. The nerves that exit your spine in the upper back and neck become irritated; your lower back gets compressed, interfering with the blood and nerve supply to the muscles in your back and legs. Your chest, which contains your lungs and heart, can't expand to allow sufficient oxygen to meet the needs of all your muscles. The heart has to pump harder to force the blood to flow faster through the vessels to try to make up for it. The muscles become tight and hard, preventing oxygen and nutrients from nourishing the starving muscle cells, causing fatigue and pain due to a build up of tension and toxins.

Chiropractic adjustments help by restoring the function of the spine and joints, correcting structural alignment, which facilitates the nerve flow. Your breath moves easily into the lungs and blood vessels are open carrying vital oxygen and nutrients to all the cells in your body. Just by correcting your posture and spinal misalignments, you are taking a big step forward on your path to wellness.

Case Study

In many patients I see, postural problems are the culprit in both severe, acute back pain, and nagging aches and pains that have been long standing and chronic. One of the more common problems related to posture is upper back tension and strain. Sharon, (not her real name), 40+, works for a design company, came in to see me with severe neck and upper back pain, accompanied by numbness and tingling into her arms and hands. She sits at her computer for long hours, commutes daily with her laptop, and travels around the region several times a month. She was having difficulty sleeping due to pain. She tried to start an exercise program

but that just made things worse. She had been to her GP who prescribed muscle relaxers and pain killers, and told her to wear a soft neck collar. He said she needed more exercise. Massage helped temporarily, but sometimes seemed to also aggravate her pain and numbness. After a year of this, frustrated and depressed, on her friend's recommendation, she came to see me for a consultation.

I took a thorough history of her condition and lifestyle, and examined her neck and spine. I found out her lifestyle had deteriorated to eating fast food on the go, drinking coffee to stay alert and on her weekends she was so exhausted it was all she could manage to keep up with her house work.

When I examined her neck and upper back I found the muscle were thick and hard and very painful to even light pressure. The numbness was off and on usually after sitting at the computer for several hours or sleeping. Her upper back was extremely stiff and rounded forward, causing the weight of her head to hang forward. I requested x-rays due to the long standing nature of her condition and because the numbness and tingling indicated nerve compression.

A holistic approach

On her first visit I explained that we would need to take a holistic approach to her problem, it would involve not only chiropractic adjustments, but she would also need to make some changes in her lifestyle, such as diet and exercise that would support the changes we would be making in her muscles and spine. Any long term improvement requires a long term commitment to a healthy lifestyle.

Some of the initial changes I recommended were taking the time to prepare wholesome nutritious meals, this is an absolute necessity in order to provide nutrients the body needs to maintain health, stay focused and alert, and have energy to enjoy life. I also asked her to eliminate coffee. Coffee is a problem for many reasons, it is a stimulant, therefore increasing muscle tension preparing the body for "fight or flight", it is a diuretic, leaching out helpful nutrients which assist the muscles to relax and function well. It also aggravates any sleeping problems and thereby compromises the body's need to rest and recuperate in proportion to the many hours of activity.

To help reduce muscle tension and pain, I asked her to rub sesame oil on her neck and upper back twice daily before she showers. Sesame oil massage, an ancient Ayurvedic practice, has recently come into the spotlight of even modern medical practice. It has been shown to reduce inflammation and toxins in the muscles and relieve pain. The Vedic tradition maintains that it promotes softness and luster to the skin, lubricates muscles, tissues and joints and increases flexibility. Additionally I advised her to apply an ice pack to her neck and shoulders, for short intervals (10-15 minutes), in frequent cycles, several times daily. This stimulates a flushing action of blood and lymph flow to the area, which effectively removes toxins and metabolic waste from the tissues, and relieves pain.

I recommended specific nutrients such as calcium and magnesium which are crucial minerals to support muscle relaxation and normal muscle and nerve function. I taught her simple breathing exercises, which would help relax her muscles and her mind.

Your partner in wellness

We set up a treatment plan that would involve an initial phase of frequent adjustments 2-3 times weekly for 2-3 weeks, then reducing frequency as her condition improved and she implemented the recommended lifestyle changes.

Her x-rays showed mild degeneration in her neck spine (cervical spondylosis), which is a condition that is caused by chronic stress and strain and/or an old injury. There was evidence of biomechanical stress on the neck spine due to the lack of normal C-shaped curve (lordosis) in her neck, and several misaligned vertebrae.

She responded well to the initial phase of treatment, motivated by the reduction in pain and the elimination of numbness and tingling, she was therefore happy to comply with many of the changes I recommended.

Exercise is an absolute necessity for long term management of any type of back and neck pain, also important for maintaining general health and wellness. It is important to choose a type of exercise that is enjoyable and will fit into your daily routine for the rest of your life. A combination of strengthening, stretching and cardiovascular conditioning is needed. Prior to seeing me, Sharon tried to exercise at the gym, doing yoga classes that were far too strenuous for the condition of her spine. Headstands, shoulder stands, and even arm balances (such as down facing dog) increased the compression in her already too tight neck and upper back spine, and aggravated her condition.

Once the muscles become supple and the spine is aligned properly, these exercises may be helpful to improve strength and flexibility in her neck and upper back. I think yoga is one of the best forms of exercise when done under the guidance of a qualified instructor. It is important that the postures (asanas) are appropriate for the individual and done with concentrated awareness, working with the breath. Yoga works specifically on the muscles that support the spine to restore optimal posture and reduce nerve irritation. It is holistic, helping you developing the self-awareness necessary to understand your body and mind.

On the fourth week after eight adjustment sessions, we reduced her treatments to once a week and started some simple, pain free yoga exercises she could do at home. The tingling and numbness in her arms was gone and her spine much more supple. She could maintain her upper back posture without much effort and she also knew she needed to take frequent breaks while working at her computer.

Sharon continues to get adjusted about once a month, due to her job stress and travel schedule she finds that monthly chiropractic adjustments help reduce the tension that builds up on a day to day basis. She has been pain free for several months now aside from the occasional stiff neck or aching shoulder muscles from carrying her laptop or sleeping in awkward positions, but the pain is mild and goes away after a good nights sleep. She maintains a 30 minute daily yoga routine which addresses her individual needs. She has more energy now to enjoy her leisure time, and to prepare wholesome nutritious meals.

Wellness for Life

As her condition continues to improve I will continue to support her lifestyle improvements to help her avoid any medication or reliance on medical care, and even reducing the frequency of her chiropractic adjustments. She will move out of the treatment phase and into maintaining her wellness.

A healthy lifestyle that supports wellness is unique to each individual. You must determine what works best for yourself. Only you can listen to your body's wisdom and make the choices that are right for you. A chiropractor who emphasizes a personalized, holistic approach can be a valuable partner in developing your wellness program.