

# Kids First

## Chiropractic Solutions to Tummy Troubles



I simply cannot believe the number of children I see with digestive problems. Many of these patients feel that their difficulties are just an inconvenience and that they can get by with only the occasional stomach cramping, constipation and once-a-week diarrhea! They think rectal bleeding is normal, that blood in the stool is OK and that missing school or work because of these difficulties is just part of life!

I hate to burst your bubble. It's not normal. Symptoms of digestive distress usually are indicators that there is a malfunction somewhere within the system. Ignoring such signs is akin to cerebral constipation and one thing I've learned over 25 years of practice is that the body does not like to be ignored.

Your digestive system is essentially a long tube that starts at your mouth and ends at your other end. It has one purpose—to extract nutrients and energy from the foods you eat. Digestive organs—esophagus, stomach, liver, gall bladder and intestines—are simply modifications of that tube. Certain digestive enzymes, juices, acids and other additives are secreted into this system to make the digestion of foods and the extraction of energy more productive. This system is efficient when it functions normally.

Many children and adults, however, suffer from a malfunction of the digestive system. In fact the three most common conditions affecting intestinal function that I see in my practice are irritable bowel syndrome, ulcerative colitis and Crohn's disease.

Crohn's disease is the most serious. It's a chronic and long-term ulceration

of the digestive tract. It usually extends though the wall of the intestine and involves all layers of your digestive tube. In essence, the body attempts to heal localized ulcers and sores and produces scar tissue, which then restricts the movement of food through the system.

Ulcerative colitis, on the other hand, mainly involves the internal layers called the "mucosa" and the "submucosa." An irritable bowel is even lesser on this scale.

Your nervous system runs your whole body and all its functions: your immune system, heart, healing ability and even your digestive system. All these function under direct orders from your nervous system. If there is interference with its normal function, your body will not work the way it should. We call this interference a vertebral subluxation. It means that the nervous system is no longer able to control the normal function of your intestinal area.

A subluxation that caused this scope of damage has usually become a pattern the body has learned. It's a habit—a bad one! A chiropractor will, in all likelihood, place a patient suffering with digestive difficulties on an intense schedule of care in order to get a handle on this bad habit as quickly as possible. We are in fact changing neural programming. However, it's not treatment for these conditions. Rather, the emphasis is to correct subluxations and make the body function normally. Seeing a chiropractor is crucial, but there are a number of other things you can do for your child.

• A hot water bottle placed on the

stomach area relieves abdominal cramping.

- Charcoal tablets help absorb excess gas from bloating. Don't use for a long period of time. They also absorb most of the nutrients from the digestive tract.
- Slippery elm relaxes intestinal muscles and reduces cramping.
- Multi-vitamin and mineral complex capsules containing copper, manganese selenium and potassium are all important because these diseases are characterized by malabsorption.
- Vitamin E is essential in the repair of epithelial tissue of the intestinal tract and acts as an antioxidant.
- Vitamin A (approximately 50,000 IU per day unless you are pregnant) aids in the repair of epithelial tissues. You may take this in capsule form, but I suggest raw carrots put through a juicer. The carrots should be peeled if they are not organic. The skin contains most of the chemicals and pesticides which can irritate your intestine.
- Calcium and magnesium, at least 2,000 mg daily.
- Vitamin C, in very high doses combined with bioflavonoids is essential as it minimizes inflammation.
- Garlic is known for preventing free radicals from attacking the intestinal lining.
- Vitamin B<sub>12</sub> and folic acid. ■

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