

Chiropractic Is the Answer ... Again

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The United States is once again in crisis. This time, like many other times, it is a crisis of our own making: obesity.

Through poor eating habits, lack of exercise and general laziness, we are literally super-sizing ourselves to early graves.

What is even worse is the fact that we are condemning our children to a similar fate, but 20 years sooner.

The front-page article, "Girth of a Nation," is a serious indictment of the inability of our current "health" system to promote health. It is more than obvious that our "take a drug, feel better" approach to what is casually called "health" is not working. The public is beginning to realize that continually striving to eradicate diseases from an abused body is not the way to achieve true health and wellness.

According to the recent studies, more than 30 percent of America's children are eating fast food every day! This is causing approximately one-third of them to become overweight or obese by age 13, and almost 50 percent to tip the scales by age 15.

Most American children don't eat a single fresh fruit or vegetable for days, if not longer. They sit in front of their TVs (or computers, or talk on the phone, etc.) with no hope of getting the exercise required to maintain any semblance of fitness. When they get too heavy, the solution is diet drinks, bulimia, drugs or some combination. (I heard one young woman lament that she weighed 40 pounds less when she was taking amphetamines.)

Family meals are a thing of the past. Daily cooking has been relegated to McDonald's, Ralston Purina (makers of animal chows and the Jack-in-the-Box franchise) and other companies that are experts at making not necessarily nutritious food taste great and last long.

This point came home to me during the recent holidays when we were visiting family and friends. One evening, my wife and I cooked dinner for about 30 people. We cooked a chicken dish as a main course. When we were through stripping the meat off the bones, we decided to throw the bones in a pot to make chicken soup.

Three hours and a few vegetables later, we served the soup to the crowd. To our amazement, almost no one under the age of 40 knew how to make chicken soup from scratch. Apparently, the joy of cooking something as simple as homemade soup was lost to the Campbell company years ago.

It is time for chiropractic to reintroduce the concept of health to the American public. As a doctor of chiropractic, you understand what is needed for good health. You understand proper function, proper diet, proper nutrition and proper exercise. You have the opportunity to talk to parents (the real culprits) about their own health habits and request they bring in their children for "wellness" examinations.

Yes, children need to be examined for subluxations and functional problems, too. But it doesn't take long to ask about diet, nutrition and exercise. You can address all aspects of total health.

You could become known as the doctor to see when children in your community are overweight. This gives you the chance to see the entire family, educate them about chiropractic, health and wellness, and make lifelong chiropractic patients.

Think about it.

If you see a parent in your office who has at least three children, you are almost guaranteed that one is overweight or obese. The parents know it and that child knows it. The only help they are getting is from Slim Fast or Jenny Craig. Why not ask?

Ask all of your patients about their eating habits. Ask them about their children's eating habits. How is their children's health? Are their children overweight?

Print out copies of "Girth of the Nation" and distribute them to your patients. Let them know that the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has a body mass index (BMI) calculator on its Web site (www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/bmi/calc-bmi.htm). Encourage parents to use the calculator to evaluate their children's health. If any child is at or near the overweight or obese ranges, the parents should bring him or her in for you to see. You have the knowledge to bring health back into their lives.

Much of the U.S. population still doesn't understand the full value of chiropractic care. But as we continue to demonstrate our effectiveness to address issues such as back pain and obesity, they will learn. One by one, they will learn.

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FEBRUARY 2004