

We Get Letters & E-Mail

Damaging Words From a Poor Source

Dear Editor:

In the [October 2011 Reader's Digest](#), in the article "When Alternative Medicine Goes Wrong," by Michelle Crouch, she quotes an internist named Peter Lipson from Southfield, Mich. He attempts to make a causal relationship between chiropractic adjustment and stroke as a result of vertebral artery dissection. This has been a topic of study for decades; a recent review of stroke incidence in the journal *Spine* found that a visit for care with a chiropractor doesn't raise stroke risk any more than a visit to a medical doctor's office. A research paper published in 2001 in the *Canadian Medical Association Journal* found there is a one in 5.85-million risk that a chiropractic neck adjustment will cause a stroke. In other words, a chiropractor would have one stroke event in 48 practice lifetimes.

What explains Dr. Lipson's observation of this phenomenon? [Cassidy, et al.](#), authors of the *Spine* study, note that VBA stroke is a very rare event in the population. The increased risk of VBA stroke associated with chiropractic and medical visits is probably due to patients with headache and neck pain from VBA dissection seeking care before their stroke. They found no evidence of excess risk of VBA stroke associated with chiropractic care compared to primary care. Dr. Lipson would be closer to the mark to complain about his patient's suffering strokes following visits to a beauty parlor - a cause of vertebrobasilar syndrome that is well-established in the literature.

I suggest that authors not take the word of a non-chiropractor about chiropractic "controversies" without seeking evidence of the assertion in the literature. I can't imagine the damage this one ill-considered comment has made to a population of neck pain and headache sufferers who might delay appropriate care for fear of stroke.

Chiropractic has been shown to be safe, of reasonable cost and effective in the treatment of many conditions. As noted in one of your previous issues this year, in a age in which medical mistakes and drug related fatalities are on the rise as much as the cost of medical care, chiropractic is well-positioned to integrate as preventative, episodic and chronic management in health care.

Les Peterson, DC
Arlington, Wash.

We All Need to Be Accountable for Our Food Choices

Dear Editor:

I read with interest the article, "Is McDonald's Beginning to Correct Its Course?" [[Oct. 7 DC](#)] I am happy to report that the McDonald's in our area is already implementing "apples in every Happy Meal." However, I would like to remind everyone that McDonald's is not a nonprofit organization. If a menu item does not generate sufficient sales, it will be removed from the menu. Furthermore, the consumers of Happy Meals [children] do not have the transportation or the funds to make the final

decision regarding the purchase of said menu items. Parents and other adults are ultimately responsible for these purchases.

After reading your article, I read "Science Daily" 10/03/2011, "What's in a Kid's Meal? Not Happy News." They agreed with your findings of the horrible nutrition of Happy Meals. Their report referenced data from a study, compiled by researchers in the Department of Pediatrics at the University of California at San Diego, which appeared in the new journal *Childhood Obesity*.

In the study, just over half the families reported their choice of items was as a reward to the children. Adults also overwhelmingly reported that they liked the food. Convenience and taste were the driving factors in their decision, not the toy. Interestingly, even when given a choice, soda was purchased much more often than milk or juice. When healthier options such as "Apple Dippers" or fruit parfaits were available, families did not choose them over more typical fast foods.

Everyone needs to be held accountable for their food choices. We need to understand that these choices are the building blocks of good health and not a means to repair it when it is broken. The medical field, chiropractors included, have a limited amount of time with each patient; therefore, individuals must have the desire to want to make the right choices for themselves. Only then will they educate themselves on the best choices. Companies will offer to the public choices with which they will make a profit. If the consumer doesn't buy it, the choice won't be out there for long.

Cissy Allen (chiropractic patient)
Blue Ridge, Ga.

It's My Decision What I Eat, Not the Government's

Dear Editor:

I agree that obesity is a great problem in this country and that many need education and choices in healthy eating. But to even to make the insinuation that our government should be the one to take charge in making decisions of what I should eat ... no thank you. Our government has made such great choices in our health decisions in the past (ha-ha).

Remember, this is the same government that gives us the food pyramid and the FDA, which wants to tell us what [supplements](#) are best for our patients. And don't forget this is the same government that has always treated chiropractors as second-class citizens because it knows what is best!

Everyone has seen somewhere in print how unhealthy fast food is. So apparently, the government hasn't even done a very good job of teaching everyone how to read. I'm not a fan of McDonald's; fact is, I'm really not sure if I have ever eaten at one. But I do know this: If I ever want to buy myself a Happy Meal, Duncan Donut, etc., that is my decision to do so, not Uncle Sam's.

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