

Three Causes of Vertebral Subluxation in the Pediatric Population

PT. 2: CHEMICAL & MENTAL/EMOTIONAL STRESSORS

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In part 1 of this two-part series ([May 6 issue](#)), we explored the numerous physical stressors that may be contributing to vertebral subluxation in children. Now let's discuss the chemical and mental/emotional stressors that children must deal with and that can contribute to subluxation.

Chemical Stressors

Foods. Although the [World Health Organization encourages breast-feeding until age 2](#), if not longer, North American compliance with this recommendation is [very low](#). At birth, 70 percent of infants are breast-fed. By six months of age, that number falls to 36 percent and by 12 months, it is 18 percent. Formula-fed babies have an increased likelihood of infections and are candidates to develop allergies later in life.)

Pediatricians often place infants on cereals by the third month of life "so they can sleep through the night." Considering that gluten is one of the leading food allergens for children, this begins a vicious cycle of placing stress on the body. The five major food allergens (chemical stressors) with children are; gluten, dairy, soy (infant formulas), corn (found in a majority of processed foods) and peanuts.

Currently, up to [half of new diabetes diagnoses in children](#) are type 2 diabetes. Studies have linked this insulin resistance with obesity. Considering that on a typical day, [30 percent of children](#) eat fast food, it's no wonder that [\\$130 billion](#) is spent on fast food each year.

Vaccines. Other chemical stressors to children are ingredients that can be found in vaccines. These include mercury, aluminum, hydrochloric acid, formaldehyde, ethylene glycol, latex and MSG. According to the National Vaccine Information Center, children receive [48 doses of 14 vaccines before age 6](#), and the number of doses has doubled in the past 25 years. The lack of responsibility to test which children may be sensitive to potential neurotoxins is difficult to understand.

Fillings. Although many in the dental field are attempting to send warnings that fillings may not be safe, dental fillings, or amalgam, still contain the [following ingredients](#): 50 percent mercury, 30 percent silver and differing amounts of tin, zinc and copper.

Pesticides. Pesticides are a constant in our lives, with children ingesting up to [15 pesticides each day](#). Various types of produce, including sweet bell peppers, lettuce, hot peppers, apples, peaches, cucumbers, strawberries, imported grapes, green beans and pears, may contain anywhere from 30 to 60 trace pesticides. With genetically engineered food products such as corn, soy, potato, tomato, canola and cottonseed oil, papaya, radicchio, squash and salmon on the rise, a child's diet may be inundated with chemicals, since manufacturers are not required to label the products accordingly.

Since there have not been studies on long-term effects in the pediatric population, shouldn't one err on the safe side?

Drugs. With anti-smoking and drug messages bombarding our young people, the lack of results is staggering. [Twenty-two percent](#) of high school students smoke. According to a recent [poll of high school seniors](#), 66.4 percent drink, 31.7 percent smoke marijuana, 7.5 percent take stimulants and 5.2 percent use cocaine. Regarding illicit drug use among children ages 12 and older, 45 percent have at least tried it once in their lifetime, 15 percent in the past year and 8 percent in the past 30 days.

Mental/Emotional Stressors

The common mental stressors that affect children of all ages are often overlooked. [One in eight children](#) experiences anxiety, and it's often linked to fractured families, bullying and failure to succeed. It is estimated that as many as [one-third](#) of students have experienced bullying (as the bully or the one bullied), and that [160,000 children](#) will miss at least one school day because of bullying. Most children are afraid to report it to an adult.

Being a teenager is not easy when it comes to self-image. [Fifty percent](#) of 13- to 15-year-old girls believe they are overweight, and 80 percent of 13-year-old girls have already tried dieting. Some will develop anorexia nervosa during their teen years.

[Twenty percent of teens](#) will experience depression, but less than 33 percent will get help, and 30 percent will develop a substance abuse problem if not properly treated. It should also be noted that suicide is the third leading cause of death among teenagers.

What You Can Do

As a family wellness chiropractor, teaching parents how to limit chemical and mental stressors in the lives of their children is of utmost importance. This might begin with teaching workshops, creating a lending library in your office or finding educational tools that support this goal.

Although prevention is the key, most children will be exposed to physical, chemical and mental stressors in their lives. This is why reviewing children's lifestyle habits is important. The family wellness chiropractor can take an active role to reduce those triggers, along with educating parents about the correlation between stressors, subluxation and lifestyle consequences. This responsibility of overseeing lifestyle habits - and the reality that children cannot live their lives "in a bubble" - necessitates that you implement a regular check-up routine for children.

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