



WellCare Newsletter

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QUICK INSIGHT Chiropractic and Otitis Media

As many parents are already aware, Otitis media, or inflammation of the middle ear, is heavily prevalent in young children in the wintertime. Popular solutions like tubes and antibiotics simply have children returning to the doctor month after month.

In fact, a study by the Medical University of South Carolina, Charleston in 2000 concluded that antibiotics do little to reduce the frequency of return visits in cases of Otitis media, and that antibiotics can do nothing to keep Otitis media from returning. Still, reoccurring ear infections account for nearly 35% of visits to the pediatrician, and for many it seems like the only option is to keep going back for more Amoxicillin, the most common antibiotic given for middle ear infections.

Despite this trend, there is good news: Pediatricians are now referring cases of Otitis media to chiropractors at a much higher rate because, after a course of 12 to 18 adjustments, ear infections rarely recur in many children. Additionally, a study published in the Journal of Manipulation and Physiological Therapeutics found that 93% of cases of Otitis media improved under chiropractic care, with 75% of cases disappearing after 10 or fewer treatments, and 43% after just one or two treatments.

In the interest of keeping antibiotic prescriptions and unnecessary surgical costs to a minimum, it is becoming increasingly clear that chiropractic is the better long-term alternative in cases of Otitis media.



Work Doesn't Have to Be a Pain

We've all heard the suggestions for heavy lifting and other manual labor activities (use your knees to bear the weight, keep your back straight, etc.), but what about the millions of Americans with desk jobs, sitting behind a monitor all day? A desk job might sound cushy to those in the field, but pain can be a hindrance in the office too.

A few simple changes can make all the difference:

- Choose a desk that is the proper height – all items should be within easy reach.
- Keep your feet on the floor, allowing your legs to form a 90-degree angle at the knee.
- Don't hunch over or slouch.
- Make sure the top of your monitor is at eye level. Looking up or down will create strain on your neck.
- If you can, use a headset for phone calls, especially prolonged calls, instead of holding the phone between your ear and shoulder.
- Take micro breaks often to stretch and every 30 minutes, get up and take a short walk.
- Finally, try to use your entire arm and hand to move your mouse, not just your wrist. Keep your wrist at a neutral (straight) position.

Incorporate these tips in your office space to make each day a little more relaxed and pain free.

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Shoveling Snow for Better Health

Turn a despised winter chore into a healthy cold-weather workout

At the top of your driveway you stand, early one wintery morning - still groggy with sleep, you pause at the sight of a truckload of snow settled and undisturbed, standing between you and the morning paper. As beautiful a scene it may be, it is hard to look forward to the job of clearing it all away.

Before your shovel first touches the unbroken snow, a chiropractor will already see the potential hazards ahead. To our bodies and our backs, there is little difference between tackling a driveway full of snow and a weight-training session in the gym. In fact, shoveling snow may pose even more risk, and require more preparation and care than a warm, sure-footed workout indoors.

Snow shoveling risk factors include:

Morning Inflexibility – So soon after waking up, the intervertebral disks in our backs are not nearly as flexible or receptive to stress, as they are later in the day after naturally warming up.

Cold Temperature – Even with layers of clothing, muscles may struggle to maintain proper flexibility in the cold.



Deceptive Weight – When shoveling, our bodies act as a lifting fulcrum, and the further from our bodies we hold the snow, the greater the weight factor grows.

Awkward Twisting – “Throwing” the snow, either off to the side or behind our backs, introduces a constantly varying degree of stress at points all along our backs.

Fatigue and Dehydration – As muscles tire and our bodies sweat, so increases the risk of injury, as the supporting muscles in our legs and backs lose strength.

Here are a few simple tips to help turn the chore of shoveling into a healthy winter exercise:

- **Wake Up, Warm Up** – If you are just rolling out of bed, put in at least 10 minutes of activity around the house before bundling up to head outside.
- **Be Pushy** – Never throw the snow. Instead, push it out in front of you. When it gets too deep to push, don't fight with it; simply push the snow in layers, from top to bottom.
- **The Right Tool** – Find an ergonomically designed shovel (with a bent handle) that requires less back bending. In addition, a *smaller* blade is better. While it might take more scoops to clear a driveway, each is much lighter and easier to manage.
- **The Right Fuel** – Take a break every 15 minutes, but avoid the coffee or hot chocolate. Though warm and tempting, neither properly hydrates. Water or sports drinks will keep you properly fueled.

While you should never underestimate the potential risks involved in shoveling snow, don't let the risks keep you from getting the job done, and staying fit and active in the process.

Arthritis

No Longer a Matter of Age

According to orthopedic surgeon Dr. Tom Ellis of the Ohio State University Medical Center, diagnoses of youth arthritis have increased in recent years. Oftentimes occurring shortly after or in conjunction with an injury, cases may go untreated because parents either attribute the pain to the original injury, or write it off as growing pains. “If your child complains about a pain that has been persistent, or he or she avoids certain physical activities they normally enjoy, it's a good indication that there is an underlying cause,” Ellis states. That underlying cause could be juvenile arthritis, a condition affecting nearly 300,000 youth nationwide.

Five Symptoms of Juvenile Arthritis

- Stiffness when awaking and joint pain during the day.
- Swelling around joints.
- Reduced activity level.
- Awkward or deliberately slow movements.
- The condition does not improve over time.

It is important for parents to listen to their children for these symptoms because, along with injury, infection can also be a serious cause of arthritis in juveniles or adults. Either way, damage from untreated arthritis in youth can have lifelong impact. When caught early, juvenile arthritis is treated and managed much more easily. If your child is expressing any of the above symptoms, alert your chiropractor as soon as possible and get a quick assessment.

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