



# The Wellness Family

Dr. Sherri Raley and Dr. Katie Chenkus Keep You Informed

## Automobile Accidents

When an individual or an entire family is in an automobile accident they may seek out a chiropractor to provide care for their soft-tissue injuries. The Family Wellness Chiropractor is skilled in caring for the entire family; moms, dads, kids, infants, teens and even grandparents and pregnant moms.

That's not to say that every automobile accident related injury will benefit from Chiropractic Care, some injuries may require care by other specialists; but the Doctor of Chiropractic is well versed in the injuries that result from automobile accidents and can help your family recover through gentle adjustments.

### The Injured Child

In the United States in 2011, more than 650 children died (under the age of 12) and 148,000 were injured in automobile accidents. Additionally, in the first six months of 2011, over 200 teens, ages 16-17, were killed in motor vehicle crashes.

Dr. Dan Murphy, considered an expert in the effects of automobile accidents on children and pregnant women, has found that there are many contributing factors to the injuries sustained by children involved in collisions. These include head size, body length and their center of gravity, just to name a few. He has also determined that these same factors are affected by the type of child restraints in use at the time of the accident.

### Children and the Chiropractor

The pediatric population may be one of the most underserved when it comes to post-automobile collision care. Considered "fine" because they "were in a car seat" or "have no apparent symptoms" (i.e. no specific pains that are considered normal effects of a car accident) many parents and most family practitioners are not aware that children may have soft-tissue injuries that warrant further examination by a Family Wellness Chiropractor that specializes in the care of children.

Many times there are "Silent Signals" that something is amiss that will be noticed by a parent but not deemed something of concern by a pediatrician or family practitioner. However, your Doctor of Chiropractic will recognize these as a signal from the body that something isn't right.

One of these signals may be "positional discomfort". This can be seen when an infant or toddler becomes fussy or is obviously in distress when placed in a certain position. For instance, lying on their back or placed in a reclined position. Other signals include night terrors, picky eating, elimination issues (usually

constipation), being exceptionally clingy, anxious or unable to focus. Of course, these signals are of increased concern if they are out of the blue or out of the realm of normal behavior for this particular child.

If you are unsure if your child has been injured in an automobile accident and you are noticing any of the above "Silent Signals" your child may benefit from a chiropractic exam.

### Consultations, Examinations and Re-Examinations

Your Family Wellness Chiropractor knows that being in a car seat doesn't mean your child was immune to injury and may ask you the following questions regarding the automobile accident:

- Type of restraint system that was used
- Location in vehicle; and if an older child, can they communicate pre-impact body position?
- Position of the child after the injury
- Was there crying, confusion, signs of pain or discomfort?
- What other symptoms besides neck, back pain or headaches?



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Your Doctor of Chiropractic's examination may vary due to the nature of the injury and the position your child was in at the moment of impact. Examinations that they may perform are static and motion palpation, range of motion tests, postural or maybe even x-rays if it's warranted by the results of the initial consultation and exam.

Your child will also have regular re-examinations which are recommended every 30 days or 12 visits. Things to consider at that time could be your child's quality of life, how they're sleeping, their appetite and behavior as all of these can be symptoms of the underlying effects of the automobile accident. Also, remember that it's not unusual for a child to be unable or no longer want to perform activities that they used to enjoy.

### **Your Child's Advocate**

Unfortunately, the insurance community has historically not accepted the legitimacy of soft-tissue injuries in children resulting from automobile accidents. They generally assume, and mistakenly believe, that if the child was in a car seat then they were invulnerable. As a parent, if you've noticed any abnormal behavior or unusual symptoms in your child, you are a better judge of what is normal for your child.

Your Family Wellness Chiropractor will listen to you and will be your child's advocate for care. They will probably ask you a lot of questions that may seem unrelated to the insult suffered during the car accident but know that they are gathering as much information as possible to ensure that your child gets all the care they need.

### **The Pre-Natal Patient**

Automobile accidents during pregnancy can be extremely frightening with statistics stating that an estimated 300 to 1,000 unborn children die in car accidents each year. Sadly, this may not even be accurate as states are not required to track fetal deaths when reporting accident data.

Concerns for the unborn baby can include placental abruption (this is when the placenta becomes detached from the uterus), physical in-utero injury (which may result in cerebral palsy, brain damage or other birth defects) or an increased risk of danger to the mother or child during delivery, just to name a few.

Your Family Wellness Chiropractor will want to see any reports from the accident to determine how best to proceed during your consultation and initial examination. It's important for your Doctor of Chiropractic to know what immediate care, if any, was offered and what your OB or midwife has determined.

### **Questions to Consider**

As with pediatric injuries, your Family Wellness Chiropractor will ask questions that will help to determine any areas of special concern. Some of the questions will be:

- How close were you to the steering wheel?
- Did the airbag deploy and where was the point of strongest contact?
- How was the seatbelt used?
- Did you feel abdominal trauma from the seatbelt?
- What position was your body in at the time of the collision and where was it afterwards?
- Did you go to the emergency room immediately or to your OB/midwife first?
- Was their bruising from the airbag or seatbelt?
- What did your OB or midwife report?

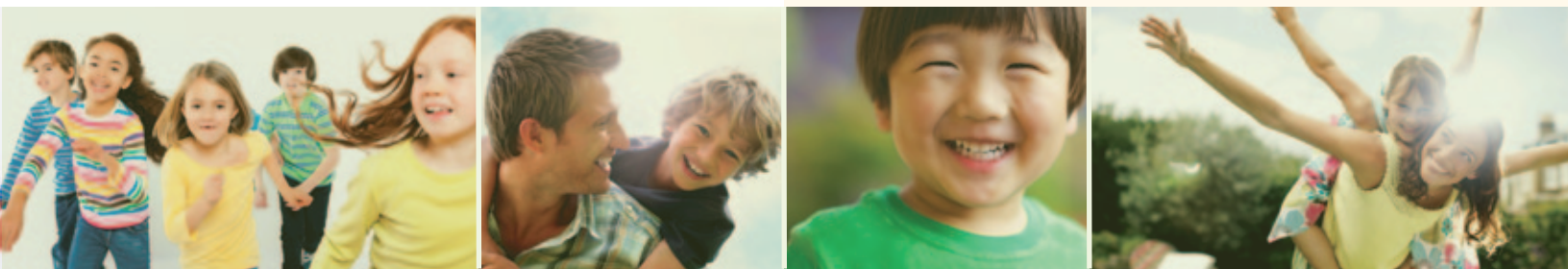
### **Special Circumstances**

An increase in the hormone Relaxin may cause the joints and ligaments to be more relaxed which may actually allow for more soft-tissue damage than may have been suffered by a woman who is not pregnant. For example, if your arms were on the steering wheel, you may have an increased chance of insult to your neck or upper back. If your right leg was extended out on a pedal (either gas or brake) your pelvis may have rotated on impact.

It's very important to have a comprehensive consultation and examination in order to document the nature of any injury suffered in an automobile accident. You and your unborn baby may benefit from gentle adjustments.

### **In Summary**

For both the pediatric and pregnant patient, the Doctor of Chiropractic will consider all factors involved with an automobile accident and determine how best to assist the body in recovering.



*Dear Patient,  
The doctors of Vitality Chiropractic are dedicated to providing you with the absolute best in family wellness care. So take a moment today to discuss with your Family Wellness Chiropractor any concerns you may have regarding your family's overall health and wellness.*

### **This newsletter is provided to you by:**

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