

Stress

Stress makes current problems worse and starts new ones.

Recently with so many people suffering the undeniable effects of stress, I was asked to be a guest expert on News 14 Carolina's television special health segments. Below is an excerpt of one of four segments that ran all day long at 55 minutes past the hour.

Relieving stress through exercise

By: Toni DeLancey & Web Staff

When war, terrorism and a troubled economy make headlines nearly everyday, do you find yourself more stressed out?

Dr. Marc Gottlieb talked to anchor Toni DeLancey to help us figure out how to relieve some of that stress. He's a chiropractic physician and an expert in how to manage a healthy lifestyle.

Toni DeLancey: What kind of effect does stress have on our bodies?



Dr. Marc Gottlieb

Dr. Gottlieb: First let's talk about what the stress response is. The body has a very important protective mechanism known as the "fight or flight" sympathetic response. This is an inborn hormonal and nervous system reflex that gives emergency capabilities to someone feeling under attack. For instance, if someone came up from behind and threatened you, you would naturally be alarmed and your adrenaline system would turn on to give you the gumption to stand there and defend yourself or the speed to flee. This is an amazingly fast response and does temporarily change the function of your body. This is a survival response so blood is diverted away from some of your internal organs (because after all, digesting lunch can wait if your life is threatened) and therefore the blood supply is sent to muscles which may need extra energy to defend or run away.

During this response, the blood pressure rises, breathing rate increases, stored energy is released from the body for immediate use and the blood actually "thickens" or becomes easier to clot which is a good thing if you get cut, but a bad thing if you are under prolonged stress because you can see how that would be unhealthy for the heart and blood vessels. So this can be a healthy protective mechanism for a short-term emergency, but these effects are also provoked by long term "life stresses" that have unhealthy consequences.

High blood pressure, high cholesterol levels, blood clotting, muscle tension, decreased immune function, and changes in food digestion are some of the ill long-term effects. The events in our lives that cause the most stress are usually things that we have been exposed to, but have no control over. For instance, everyone tends to feel the stress of the world when we are at war because it is a terrible situation, that most of us feel we cannot help, change or make an impact to improve the situation. The loss of a job or a death are also examples of big events that cause this stress response a feeling of being attacked with no recourse. We can however learn or train ourselves to not over-react to things that are within our control. Traffic for example we sometimes can't avoid but we can choose how upset we get or how we react to the situation.

Toni: Why is exercise a good way to get rid of that stress?

Dr. Gottlieb: The opportunity to "blow off some steam" or this built up stress is very important and exercise is a great way to cope with external stress. Just as there are different levels of physical fitness, there are different levels of need and therefore different exercises or ways to cope with stress.

Toni: If we are not really an active person, or not very fit...what are some ways we can relieve stress?

Dr. Gottlieb: Changing breathing patterns alone can be a huge help.

A very effective breathing technique can be used to reset you into a state of calmness.

Relaxation Breathing technique:

- Tip of tongue touching inside of top front teeth
- Exhale 8 seconds making air noise through mouth
- Inhale 4 seconds through nose
- Hold breath for 7 seconds
- Exhale 8 seconds through mouth
- Repeat 4 times, then monitor breathing, slow and deep for 5 five minutes with "your brain in neutral"

Toni: Why is this type of activity good for relieving stress?

Dr. Gottlieb: Lowering the breathing rate and improving oxygen flow through slow controlled breathing is relaxing whereas shallow, fast breathing increases carbon dioxide levels in the blood and makes you feel anxious. That is what happens to the extreme when someone hyperventilates.

Kids need Chiropractic too!

Receiving chiropractic care since early childhood, I'm always surprised by other peoples' lack of consideration that kids need chiropractic care. Myths abound that children are naturally flexible and their backs don't have problems. The exact opposite is true. Children are more flexible and this is a reason why they need chiropractic care. In fact improperly moving spinal segments lead to poor posture and bad function of joints and body movements. This bad function causes abnormal stress on bones that are still relatively soft and can change the shape of a developing bone for the worse. If you wait until the teen years to address this, much of the bone growth plates have started to close and the bone fuses with a less than desirable shape. If you don't want a legacy of adult problems for your child, it is best to get as much correction as possible accomplished in the growing years.

What do you look for?

It is sometimes not easy for the untrained eye to pick up problems in the early stages when they are easier to fix. School nurses and coaches performed school spine checks for years and missed most of the scoliosis cases. Pediatricians are often focused on childhood diseases and do not have any specialized training in muscle and skeletal problems. A wait and monitor approach until a problem is significant is not desirable.

Personally, I think everyone deserves a chiropractic evaluation and the opportunity to have exceptional health, as opposed to a mediocre existence.

Get out the family pictures and look at yourself as you grew. If you have problems now with posture, I'll bet we can spot the same issues in early photographs. Look for a head tilt to the same side, rounded shoulders, unlevelled shoulders, unlevelled hips and other signs like; usually standing to one side with one leg bent or out in front. Do the same for your kids or young relatives. Get out the photos and see what you can spot. Bring the pictures with you and I'll look at them with you on a first visit check up for your child.

Gottlieb, M.S. Neglected spinal cord, brain stem and musculoskeletal injuries stemming from birth trauma. Journal of Manipulative and Physiological Therapeutics. Oct. 1993; Vol. 16, No. 8, pp. 537-43. This is an international publication that I wrote 10 years ago. There is a need to address less obvious problems that simply cause a failure to thrive in a lot of kids. Chronic earaches, and a higher incidence of asthma are two conditions that respond well to chiropractic care. Despite the research showing such good results, many still think of chiropractic as "back related" not nervous system related. Bad posture is a huge childhood problem that leads to adult complaints. **Get your kids a chiropractic check up. Over the summer is a great time to address any problems and start some new exercise habits.**

Mom and Dad, you try carrying my backpack!

- **80% reported backpack was heavy at least sometimes**
- **65.7% reported it made them tired**
- **46.1% felt it caused them back pain**
- **Those who felt fatigued were more likely to have back pain**
- **Those who carried for longer periods of time experienced more back pain**
- **Backpack weight should not exceed 10-15% of the student's body weight. A 60lbs child should not carry more than 6-9lbs!**



Come see the ergonomic, “Airpack” Backpacks we have in the office. Air cushion and comfort straps make books feel light!



Is this what your child looks like heading off to school?

Inside this month’s newsletter read about issues critical to your child’s health.

Stress, Are you being eaten alive from the inside out?

Has it been longer than a month since your last chiropractic adjustment? You may be missing out on the stress relieving effects of chiropractic.