

Chiropractic, Nerves and Chest Discomfort

The brain talks to the body through the spinal cord and nerves. It's a two-way street: the body talks back to the brain – giving it the information it needs to make good decisions. The spine and other major joints of your body are rich in nerve endings. They continuously signal the brain, telling it where you are, what you're doing, which way you're moving, and what forces and loads you're experiencing. So, it pays to be checked by a chiropractor regularly. Why? Disturbances in the body structure quickly translate into disturbed signalling to the brain. In many cases the brain will simply cope with the disturbance, but the end result is increased general stress. That means that you can't perform at your best, which is the point of chiropractic care.

If you wait until the signalling disturbances become too severe for your brain to ignore then you may notice symptoms. In the chest area this may include



Dr Tat Loo: Chiropractor

changes in reflex and smooth muscle action (e.g. affecting swallowing, burping, reflux of stomach contents). It may include other pain and discomfort syndromes where the mechanics of the spine between the shoulder blade are disturbed. This may feel like upper back pain, shoulder or rib pain when in reality the issue is with the spine.

The ribs have two main anchor points. At the back, they join up with the thoracic spine. At the front, they join up with the breastbone (sternum). As the ribs run around from the back to the front they are followed by many nerves, as well as muscle fibres. Once the spine begins to jam, the ribs will be affected. Inevitably, the stress will reach around the front and discomfort around the sternum may result. With this kind of chest discomfort you can go for heart tests and they will come back fine – because it's not your heart! (If you have any doubts over whether or not your heart is involved you must seek urgent medical help immediately.) If the nerves between the ribs get further irritated, the resulting pain can be sharp, affecting breathing and movement.

You don't need to wait until symptoms become obvious or severe. Get checked by a chiropractor now.

This content reflects personal opinions of Dr Tat Loo, a Dunedin-based chiropractor.

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