

Cranial symmetry essential in infants

Question: My child was born with cranial imbalances and his head was much larger on the back of his skull on one side. Is it true there are Chiropractic techniques that can help this condition?

Answer: You described a condition in the skull called sub-occipital bulge. There is commonly a facial asymmetry associated with the condition also. The condition is due to fetal positioning prior to birth, or it can be as the infant moves through the birth canal, or during the delivery itself. The skull bones are soft and pliable on the fetus. An amazing phenomenon occurs as the large skull moves through the narrow birth canal. The two parietal bones (two bones creating the midline of the skull) overlap and then retract back into position, similar to a rebound of a sponge that was squeezed out of shape and then returned to its original shape. The inability for this to occur can influence cranial shaping. Forceps and vacuum suction devices used in delivery can also influence cranial asymmetries. Excessive strain on the occipital bones (bones in the back of your head) during any phase of birth can strain these bones leading to a variety of symptoms for the newborn including; torticollis, fever, loss of appetite, central nervous system disorders, swelling of one side of the facial soft tissues, asymmetrical development of the skull, hips, and pain sensitivity to light touch.

Chiropractic is very effective in these conditions. Two studies done on these syndromes, one in 1987 and one in 1992, treated more than 600 babies for occipital strain. The bottom line results were that most of the patients returned to normal between one to three visits. The most common irritation found in the

babies was an atlas (first cervical vertebra) fixation. An adjustment of this vertebra, which anatomically lies just underneath the occiput, frees neurological flow to many cranial structures and tissues. The brain stem extends beyond the skull and is protected by the first two cervical vertebrae. This may explain why so many of the symptoms immediately rectify themselves once pressure is released and normal nerve supply restored.

Quote of the week: *“Nobody grows old merely by living a number of years.*

People grow old by deserting their ideals.” - Samuel Ullman