

Turning Head Could Become a Pain in the Neck

Studies have shown that approximately 70 percent of people are afflicted with some form of neck pain at some point in their lives; 5 percent to 10 percent suffer neck pain that is debilitating. However, the symptoms associated with "nonspecific" neck pain - pain not associated with injury, disorder, or tissue degeneration - have not been studied extensively.

In a recent study in the journal *Spine*, researchers examined 40 adults, ages 19-42, with no prior neck injuries or treatment, to study the structural composition of the neck and its relation to pain.

Volunteers were tested for neck-muscle endurance, range of motion, and extension, and questioned about their history of recurrent neck pain or discomfort.

More than one in three (35%) of the study participants reported experiencing neck pain/discomfort weekly or more frequently, with duration of symptoms lasting from 30 minutes to 48 hours per occurrence. In these subjects, neck muscle endurance, neck extension and range of motion were significantly reduced compared to the remaining 26 subjects - those without reported neck pain.

The bottom line, according to the authors, is that physical limitations involving neck movement and endurance may be early signs of neck pain. Before any of that happens, make an appointment with an expert in preventing and managing musculoskeletal pain and associated limitations - a doctor of chiropractic.

Reference: Lee H, Nicholson LL, Adams RD. Cervical range of motion associations with subclinical neck pain. *Spine*, Jan. 1, 2004;29(1), pp33-40.

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The Chiropractic Answer to Whiplash

Whiplash is an all-too-common consequence of the more than one million rear-end collisions that take place in the United States every year. Although the classic symptoms of whiplash (headache, dizziness, neck, shoulder, jaw and/or arm pain) may subside after a few weeks of appropriate care, it's estimated that nearly one in four cases will become chronic, resulting in long-term discomfort and disability. Chiropractic may offer the best opportunity for relief from the pain of whiplash, according to a study published in the *Journal of Orthopedic Medicine*. Ninety-three patients with chronic whiplash symptoms were divided into three groups based upon the nature and severity of their symptoms. All 93 patients received an average of 19.3 chiropractic adjustments over the study period (about four months). Results showed that two of the three groups (patients with neck pain, restricted neck range of motion and/or neurological symptoms) improved under chiropractic care, with 85.5% reporting "some benefit," 33.5% improving by two symptom grades, and 31% being relieved of all symptoms. If you or a loved one is suffering from whiplash, make an appointment with a doctor of chiropractic. As the authors of this study conclude, when it comes to treating whiplash, "chiropractic is the only proven effective treatment."

Reference: Khan S, Cook J, Gargan M, et al. Asymptomatic classification of whiplash injury and the implications for treatment. *Journal of Orthopedic Medicine* 1999: Vol. 21, No. 1, pp22-25.

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Kids with Healthier Diets, Better Grades

Children with healthy diets perform better in school than children with unhealthy diets, researchers at the University of Alberta in Canada said. Paul J. Veugelers surveyed about 5,000 Canadian fifth-grade students and their parents as part of the Children's Lifestyle and School-Performance Study. Information regarding dietary intake, height, and weight were recorded and the Diet Quality Index-International was used to summarize overall diet quality. A score ranges from 0 to 100, with higher scores indicating better diet quality. A standardized literacy assessment also was administered to the children. The study found that students with an increased fruit and vegetable intake and less caloric intake from fat were significantly less likely to fail the literacy assessment. In addition, the students with the highest scores for diet quality -- fruits, vegetables, grains, dietary fiber, protein, calcium and moderate fat intake -- were 41 percent less likely to fail the literacy assessment.

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Money Can Buy Happiness, If You Give Gifts

If you think a large-screen TV will buy you happiness, think again -- U.S. and Canadian researchers say money can't buy happiness, but giving to others can. The study, published in *Science*, finds that people report significantly greater happiness if they spend money "pro-socially" -- that is, on gifts for others or charitable donations -- rather than spending on themselves. University of British Columbia Professor Elizabeth Dunn and graduate student Lara Aknin and Michael Norton of the Harvard Business School looked at a nationally representative sample of more than 630 Americans. They asked participants to rate their general happiness; report their annual income; and provide a breakdown of their monthly spending -- including bills, gifts for themselves, gifts for others and donations to charity. The researchers gave the participants \$5 or \$20 and told them to spend it that day. Those who spent the windfall on others reported feeling happier at the end of the day than those who spent the money on themselves. In another experiment, the researchers measured the happiness levels of employees at a firm before and after they received a bonus of \$3,000 to \$8,000. What affected the employees' happiness, was not so much the size of the bonus but how it was spent, Dunn said.

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Computer Screens Affect Child's Posture

Australian researchers suggest students' posture is affected by the height of classroom learning materials such as computer screens. The study finds a high computer screen display resulted in



upward bending of the upper neck, but the mid-level display promoted a more upright and symmetrical posture and lower average muscle activity than either the high- or the book-level position. Of the three positions, the low book-level display caused the most strain on muscles and joints. Study leader Leon Straker of Curtin University of Technology in Perth and colleagues presented an interactive task to 24 children of normal height, ages 10 to 12. Researchers recorded the children's movements and measured 3-D posture and muscle activity in the neck and upper limb for the high-, mid- and book-level displays. "The data collected in this study provide the first detailed description of 3-D head, neck and arm posture, and the associated muscle activity of children reading and entering data with computers, and reading and writing with paper.

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Coffee Creamer – Hidden Source of Calories

Coffee creamer can pack on the calories, the non-profit Center for Science in the Public Interest said in Washington. The nutrition label on Coffee-mate might list 10 calories and one-half a gram of saturated fat, but most people use about a tablespoon-size serving, Bonnie Liebman, nutrition director of the Center for Science in the Public Interest, said. "Anyone glancing at the Nutrition Facts label for most of these coffee creamers would have a false sense of security," Liebman said in a statement. It's more like 45 calories and 3 grams of heart-harmful saturated fat and three of four servings in office coffee daily and a person can consume half a day's saturated fat via coffee creamer. Several iterations of Coffee-mate and other brands are lower in saturated and trans fat. The findings, published by the Center for Science in the Public Interest's April issue of its Nutrition Action Healthletter, said that its only "Best Bite" ratings go to International Delight Fat Free and Silk liquid creamers, as well as plain old fat-free, 1 percent, 2 percent, or even whole milk, and the fat-free half & half made by Land O'Lakes and some store brands.

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Teens with Insomnia Lost More Than Sleep

Insomnia in teens costs them more than sleep; it can harm adolescents physically, psychologically and in interpersonal relations. Researchers at The University of Texas Health Science Center completed what they describe as the first prospective study demonstrating the negative impact of chronic insomnia on teens ages 11-17. Author Robert Roberts said more than ¼ of the youths surveyed had one or more symptoms of insomnia and almost half of those youngsters had chronic conditions. The findings are based on interviews of 1-2 hours with 3,134 adolescents in metropolitan Houston, part of Teen Health 2000 - a community-based, prospective study of the epidemiology of psychiatric disorders among adolescents that involved a structured psychiatric interview. The study found adolescents with chronic insomnia were much more likely to have problems with drug use, depression, school work, jobs and perceived health. "Almost half of the adolescents who reported one or more symptoms of insomnia during the initial screening had similar issues a year later," Roberts said in a statement. "Twenty-four percent met the symptom criteria for chronic insomnia as defined by the American Psychiatric Association

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Exercise Beneficial Even If No Weight Loss

Daily physical activity is beneficial to cardiovascular health even if the pounds don't drop as quickly many would like. Indiana University Bloomington researchers examined the vascular response to exercise in overweight men and found overweight, but active men respond dramatically better compared to their inactive counterparts in a new vascular response test. Ryan A. Harris, a doctoral student at Indiana University Bloomington and now a post-doctoral research fellow at the University of California in San Diego, said the active cohort saw an average 24% improvement in their vascular function, compared to the 32% decrease observed in the inactive group. "Being overweight isn't hopeless," Janet P. Wallace, a professor at Indiana University Bloomington said in a statement. "This study shows you can still do some measures to help yourself while you work to lose weight." The study involved 16 overweight men ages 46-68, half were active, performing at least 30 minutes of moderate activity on most days

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Air Bags Without Seat Belts Up Injury Risk

Drivers and passengers not wearing seat belts in a vehicle crash resulting in an air bag deployment have a higher risk of spinal injuries, a U.S. study says.



Researchers at the University of Pittsburgh used a Pennsylvania trauma database that included approximately 12,700 patients with spinal injuries - 8500 drivers and 4,200 passengers from 1990-2002. Of these, 5500 patients had fractures of the cervical spine. Dr. William Donaldson said the rate of cervical spine fractures was 54% in drivers using an airbag only, compared to 42% for drivers using both an airbag and seat belt. The study finds that with adjustment for other factors, the relative risk of cervical spine fracture was 70% higher for drivers using airbags without a seat belt, compared to drivers using both protective devices. This was greater than the 32% increase in cervical fracture risk for drivers using neither airbags nor seat belts. Airbags were specifically designed to be used with seat belts; serious injuries may result in victims who, because they are not properly restrained by seat belts, are *out of position* when airbags deploy, Donaldson says.

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Teens Eat Breakfast and Don't Get Fat

Moms always advise eating breakfast, but a U.S. study proves skipping breakfast is unhealthy and is linked to teen obesity. University of Minnesota School of Public Health researchers examined the association between breakfast frequency and five-year body weight change in more than 2,200 adolescents. Researchers find teens who eat breakfast daily have a healthier diet overall and are more physically active than teens who skip breakfast. Five years later, compared to breakfast skippers, the breakfast eaters have gained less weight. "Although adolescents may think that skipping breakfast seems like a good way to save on calories, findings suggest the opposite," says Dianne Sztainer. "Eating a healthy breakfast may help adolescents avoid overeating later in the day and disrupt unhealthy eating patterns, such as not eating early in the day and eating a lot late in the evening." It is estimated that between 12-24% of U.S. children and adolescents regularly skip breakfast, and this percentage increases with age.

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