

Chiropractic and Ageing

Musculoskeletal conditions, neck pain, back pain, gait and balance are all significant health concerns for over 55's and can be particularly disabling and frustrating.

Chiropractic care may assist in a wide range of health issues including; arthritis, joint stiffness, mobility problems, osteoporosis, back & neck pain and muscular problems.

The results of several patient-based studies suggest that chiropractic care may result in significant savings of health-care dollars. A large survey has indicated a strong connection was found between persons receiving chiropractic care and self-reported improvement in health, wellness and quality-of-life. Furthermore, the chiropractic patients report less time in hospitals.

Another comparative study of chiropractic patients, aged 65 years and older with non-chiropractic citizens of the same age, spent only 31% of the national average for health care services. The chiropractic patients also experienced 50% fewer visits to the doctor than their comparable peers. The health habits of patients receiving maintenance care were better overall than the general population, including decreased use of cigarettes and de-

creased use of non-prescription drugs.

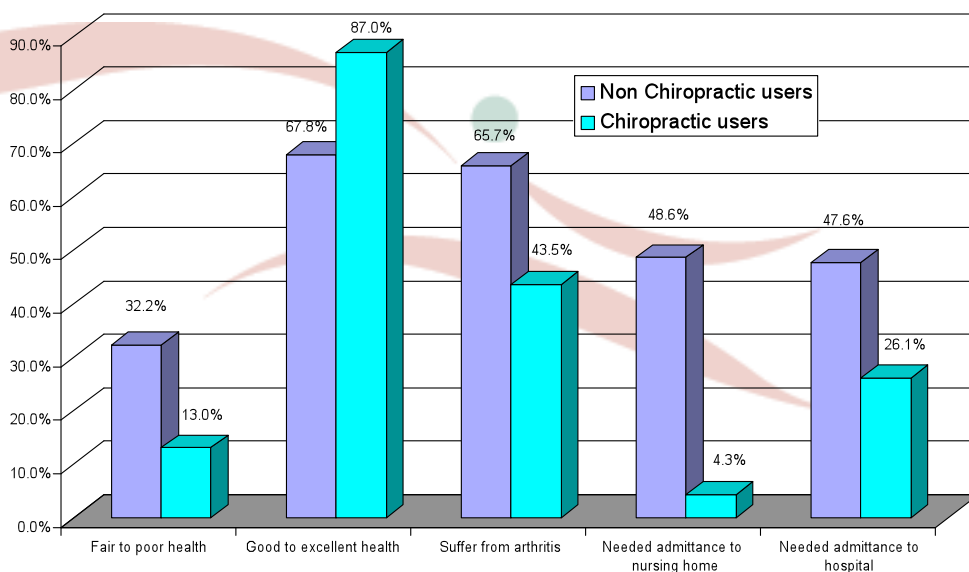
There is a growing body of evidence that wellness care provided by doctors of chiropractic may reduce health care costs, improve health behaviours, and improve patient perceived quality-of-life.

Chiropractic care for over 55's is not solely restricted to the treatment of back pain. It is common for chiropractors to recommend stretching exercises, aerobic

exercises, dietary advice and a host of other prevention strategies including vitamins and relaxation as part of a holistic health program.

The provision of health promotion and preventive services to over 55's is crucial to managing future health care costs associated with an aging population.

ELDERLY (Av 80 yrs) HEALTH COMPARISON - CHIROPRACTIC USERS AND NON USERS (Coulter*)



Hi from your health care team. Do you fear 'getting old'? If you hear the words "arthritis, degeneration or osteoporosis" do they make you feel helpless? Do you think being healthy is only for the young? As you would imagine we don't think that way! We have so many inspiring senior patients whose zest for life, vitality and fitness teaches us how to live well and long. This issue of our newsletter is devoted to how we can help you attain health in older years.

Welcome to Sue Stapleton who is our new receptionist and bookkeeper. You'll meet Sue on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays. Please don't talk to her about the Eels or on the basis of their form this year she'll suffer depression.

Meaghan Brady is busily organising her wedding in September and we wish her and her fiance well.

The month of May saw a great Chiropractic Care Week with a focus on 'Back Pain. In-house we held a cocktail party as a 'Patient Appreciation Day' for our very long term and loyal patients. For those able to attend it was a wonderful warm event that had everyone smiling and very happy.



Two wonderful women - Sue and Najeeba

Nutrition & Falls in the Elderly

Nutrition has a great impact on the risks of falls for the elderly as poor nutrition has great impact on eye sight, blood and energy levels, muscle mass and muscle strength, ability to eat and frailty.

There are lots of factors that affect a person's ability to obtain adequate nutrition. These include appetite, poverty, dependency, chronic disease, multiple medications and feeding problems. These factors can lead to a variety of problems that increase a person's risk of becoming nutritionally deficient or malnourished. This include

- Obvious underweight- frailty? or unintentional weight loss
- Reduced appetite or food and fluid intake
- Mouth or teeth or swallowing problems
- Follows a special diet (pureed foods)
- Unable to self feed
- Obvious overweight affecting life quality or unintentional weight gain

So Why Does it Matter?

Persons who are or at risk of becoming nutritionally deficient have a greater risk of falls, they need more assistance, they need more complex care, are at risk of greater complications (such as infection, pressure sores) they are less likely to be able to live independently, they need more frequent and longer stays in hospital, it can effect quality of life and may start deterioration in a downward cycle, they are at increased risk for morbidity and mortality and poor nutrition is much harder and more expensive to treat than to prevent.

High Protein High Energy Diets

Particularly underweight or frail individuals increasing the Protein and Energy in your diet will reduce the risk of falls. High protein foods include: Meat, fish chicken, eggs, dairy (milk, cheese, yogurt), beans, legumes and nuts or protein supplements e.g. Sustagen. High energy foods include: Full cream dairy products, margarine, butter salad dressings and oil, Soft drinks, cordial, chocolate, sweets, Carbohydrate supplements e.g. Polyjoule, Polycose and Nutritional supplements e.g. Resource Plus, Ensure Plus (these are also high in protein).

Tips to increase or maintain your weight

- Eat more often if you can't eat a lot. Aim for 6 smaller meals rather than 3 big meals a day, which may be too filling.
- Keep your favourite foods in the cupboard or fridge.
- Keep ready-to-eat meals and snacks handy for times when you don't feel like preparing food (e.g. tinned soups, frozen meals, yoghurt, nuts, cheese, biscuits and dips).
- Drink fluids that provide energy such as milk, juice, cordial or soft drink, instead of tea, coffee or water.
- Keep a record of your weight to check if these changes are working.
- As you start to improve and your activity level increases, you may need to increase your food intake as well.



Prevention of Falls in the Elderly

Falls are one of the more common and serious problems facing older people. Falls generally result from an interaction of multiple and diverse factors. Some older people are not aware of their risks of falling and consequently opportunities for the prevention of falls are often overlooked.

Here are some factors to consider in the prevention of falls:

Exercise - There are three types of exercise that combine to form an effective fall prevention exercise program. Aerobic exercises improve cardiovascular fitness and bring more oxygen to the brain. Strengthening exercises increase muscle tone. Balance exercises improve proprioception or our sense of body placement.

Medications - Polypharmacy (four or more prescription medications) is common in elderly patients. Some medications can increase the risk of falls due to side effects such as dizziness, fatigue, confusion or weakness. Take medications as prescribed. Medications should be reviewed regularly by your GP, taking into account risk and benefit.

Assistive Devices - A number of aids are available to assist people with walking, including walking sticks and frames. Advice can be obtained from qualified staff about the correct type, height and use of aids.

Footwear - Wear comfortable, firm-fitting, flat shoes with soles that grip. Recent studies also show that footwear with adjustable mechanisms such as velcro fastenings reduce the risk of falls. If you have difficulty finding the right type of shoes, ask Dollene or Ara for advice.



Environmental Factors

- Loose rugs, electric leads, adequate lighting and wet floors are all examples of factors that can lead to falls. Measures such as the installation of rails can help reduce the risk of falls.

Visual Disturbance - Impaired vision can also lead to falls. Gradual loss of vision has many causes such as cataracts and macular degeneration. Have your eyes tested regularly.

Massage's Healing Power for Aging and 'Change of Life'

During the middle to late years of life, massage can aid body tissues and basic functions for a more youthful state, enhance tissue elasticity and joint flexibility. It promotes blood and lymph circulation, healthy, vibrant skin and improves the immune system function while relieving muscle aches and stiffness.

The power of touch through massage provides significant benefits, in particular, during the ageing and change of life transition. Not only can massage help with these symptoms directly, it can also relax and leave you feeling better equipped to handle the changes.

Massage can increase a sense of energy and well being and improve your body's ability to recognise stress signals and respond appropriately. Massage promotes a relaxed state of mind and body and helps relieve daily stress. Nurturing yourself during the ageing and change of life transition assists with your emotional health also.

The caring nature of your therapist is another beneficial treatment. Massage therapy not only helps to ease symptoms, but can also equip you with the emotional strength to handle changes and encourage you to appreciate yourself and focus on your needs.

Massage offers deep tissue relaxation therapy, leaving you feeling totally invigorated and rejuvenated. If you or someone you know is experiencing chronic pain, why not call the office today and book an appointment with one of the friendly massage professionals at Health *plus* Chiropractic. Chronic pain, like many other conditions is manageable with the right tools.



Aging Gracefully & Happily

Ageing is often associated with many rewarding experiences. It is also a time when significant changes may occur. For example, some people experience changes in physical functioning, social networks, employment, and bereavement can become more common. Keeping a positive attitude toward ageing is particularly important as it allows you to continue to feel good and have a sense of control as you face another part of the life cycle.

The most common difficulties for older people include, maintaining health and fitness, social networks and activities, feelings of sadness and loss, ensuring financial security, decreases in mobility, and an increased reliance on others.

Maintaining a positive attitude. The way you feel about yourself and the ageing process can affect how you view life and the extent to which you are involved in activities and the opportunities life offers. If you can make choices and have control over important aspects of your life, and take part in and enjoy activities, you are more likely to feel good about yourself and get more out of life.

Staying connected. Social interaction and relationships with others are associated with positive ageing and feeling optimistic about life. Maintaining social networks through membership of clubs, engaging in voluntary work and keeping in touch with family encourages interaction with others, prevents isolation and promotes good mental health and physical activity.

Keeping the brain active. Keeping the brain active, alert and flexible can promote good mental health and positive ageing throughout the lifespan. Having an active mind can be as simple as reading a book, learning a new hobby or problem solving (e.g. doing crosswords). Learning new skills is exercise for the brain and makes it work a little harder.

Managing stress. Stress is a natural part of life that can be challenging to manage. Stress can result from positive experiences (e.g. having grandchildren) or negative ones (e.g. bereavement). Stress affects people in different ways. High levels of stress can affect physical and mental health (e.g. heart disease, depression), the quality of relationships and financial security. The way you respond to stress and daily hassles is often a good predictor of whether you will age positively, and how much you will enjoy life.

One major stressor that a lot of older people face is having

to become a carer. Caring for a spouse or a family member can be very demanding. If you become a carer you need to ensure that you are looking after yourself to avoid burnout, isolation, illness and mental health problems.

Keeping as free from stress as possible, and learning how to effectively cope with unavoidable stress, can promote positive ageing in all areas of your life.

Some good ways to manage stress and cope with daily hassles include: Thinking things through before getting upset (e.g. calling a friend for advice, writing things down) Relaxing when feeling tense (e.g. exercise, deep breathing). Using stress management skills, such as problem solving or goal setting.

Engaging in physical activity. Exercise is a great way to minimise the risk of a chronic condition such as heart disease or diabetes occurring or becoming worse. Taking part in leisure activities that you find interesting and suitable for your level of physical functioning is an effective way of becoming more active. Physical activity can also provide social interaction through being outdoors, engaging with others, or by becoming a member of an activity program or club.

It is important to remember that as you age, your physical capabilities are likely to change. Seeking guidance from a health professional before engaging in strenuous activity can reduce any risks involved.

Having regular medical checkups. Older people who have fewer medical conditions have a better quality of life, better mental health and are less restricted in their daily activities. By having regular medical check-ups, engaging in illness prevention (e.g. not smoking, drinking alcohol in moderation) and having regular tests or check-ups (e.g. blood pressure, dental) you can help to reduce the possible onset of chronic conditions.

Adapted from: *The Australian Psychological Society "Ageing Positively"*.

Government Resources: Website: www.seniors.gov.au , Phone: 1800 500 853 (Aged and Community Care Infoline). Psychologists are trained to help people manage emotional stress and adjust to difficult life circumstances, as well as treat psychological disorders such as depression and anxiety. Angelo and Josephine, psychologists at Health plus Chiropractic, can assist you if you or loved seniors need help.



Health plus
Chiropractic

Chiropractors: -
Dietitian
Massage Therapists: -
Podiatrists: -
Psychologists:-

Anthony O'Reilly, Rachael Veronesi and Bethany Coombes
Sarah Davis
Gary Fairhurst, Meaghan Brady, Sarah Egan & Najeeba Chahine
Dollene and Ara Hadjetian
Dr Angelo Schibeci and Josephine Capitani

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Health Plus Chiropractic is a team of health care professionals committed to the highest quality of care and service by being consistently enthusiastic, efficient, loving and dedicated to health care. We will treat and educate those who strive for optimum health and wellbeing, and in return be rewarded by seeing satisfied patients, reaching our full successful potential and bringing joy and fulfillment to us all.