

IS YOUR HEAD ON STRAIGHT?

For if your head isn't on straight you could be in a world of trouble, for your "world" will be crooked to you.

I just got back from a chiropractic seminar in Atlanta Georgia and the first speaker was Dr. Reagin, an ophthalmologist (eye doctor)! He began to explain to a room full of chiropractors what actually happens when the head is not on straight. It seems that when we, as a child, learn where the horizon is that fact becomes embedded in our brain. We learned this about the same time that gravity is learned by dropping our food and utensils out of our high chair, watching them go south in a hurry.

Once this is learned our brain relies on this information to hold our body upright. For it is impossible to function in a world that is based on right angles, if your eyes are seeing everything out of tilt due to the head not being on straight. Of course we know of people that always tend to hold their head to one side. Well there is a reason that is happening.

When we experience a jolt of any major proportion our bodies have to deal with handling the experience. There is a very good chance that shock will end up at the top of our neck, just under our skull. That is where the lightest and most unique part of our spine is, the *ATLAS*. In Greek mythology Atlas was a Titan compelled to carry the heavens on his shoulders. Well, the atlas vertebra has the job of holding up a twelve-pound bowling ball commonly known as our head. I say unique for we have all heard of the disc in our backs (there are 23 in total) yet the atlas does not have a disc. The Designer did this for a reason and its called mobility. Although we may not be like an owl, and do a 360 with our head, we should be able to do a 180 and a lot of that motion takes place at the atlas. To allow for this motion the joint of atlas is covered with a special cartilage called hyaline, which creates a friction level of .005. In lay terms, like fat back on a hot skillet.

If this 3-ounce bone (*ATLAS*) is to be shifted out of place then our heads are not quite where they were previous to the "jolt". This is an obvious fact because the head lies on top of the atlas and if it is shifted so goes the foundation of our skull. As our body has to accept this new position, due to the misalignment, our brain is now sensing a different horizon and has to adapt to it. This is done by shifting the hips, which draws a leg shorter, and the shoulder's heights will shift all this to make adaptations to what happens in the neck.

With the head off true center a primary concern would be some insult to our brain stem where it exits the skull. This can cause a host of problems to our body. To put it simply, the brain to body pathway can be interfered with. In a pure mechanical sense the jaw even takes on a lot more strain with this misalignment. Every word we say and every bite we take is done with a stress on one side more than the other if our head is out of alignment. This in turn can lead to what is commonly known as TMJ problems, which stands for Temporomandibular Joint. Simply put, is where your jaw hooks to your head.

This is easy to understand, just lean your head over to one side, open and close your mouth and you should be able to distinguish some stress from that alone. Could you imagine how much that would be if your head was always in that position, with a culmination of that stress. Which leads me into the case of the week.

This patient was a 32-year-old female who began care with her chief complaint being her neck and low back would ache during and after work. After a few weeks of care those problems seemed to have gotten better. It was then that her case got real interesting. First off, she reported that prior to the care we gave her she had had some light-headedness, well this seemed to improve once we began with the adjustments of her ATLAS. Then she pointed out to me how she has had TMJ problems since she was a child and had spent hundreds on orthodontic work to no avail. Well, as we got her atlas more stabilized, for the first time in 26 years she could open her mouth without it popping! That made my day, for making changes in people's lives like that is what inspires me on in practice. And, thus, it makes a case of good news worthy with sharing with the readers of the Apex Herald. Any questions please call our office 303-2213