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The Importance of Chiropractic for Pregnancy and Birth

~Pregnancy~

Let's first chat about the importance of chiropractic before, during and after pregnancy. Chiropractic normalizes the nervous system and can be beneficial for everyone for optimal health and function of your body. If there are any misalignments in your spine or cranial bones in your head, this can interfere with the signals from your nervous system and cause not only symptoms, but a decrease in function. Since nerves connect to muscle and organs, for optimal organ functioning it's important to maintain this connection system. Additionally, if fertility issues occur, nutritional supplementation can be helpful in creating a healthy environment for the fetus to grow. If this environment is not conducive to growth, fertility won't occur.

During pregnancy, the body of the woman changes rapidly. In particular the ligaments that hold the joints together, specifically in the pelvis start to loosen. This is for preparation of birth. Certain muscles tighten to protect the areas, as well as the round and sacrotuberous ligaments lengthen and stretch as the baby grows. Since, the weight isn't distributed evenly because of the stretching of the ligaments, the entire body starts to compensate and pain can occur. See Figure 1.

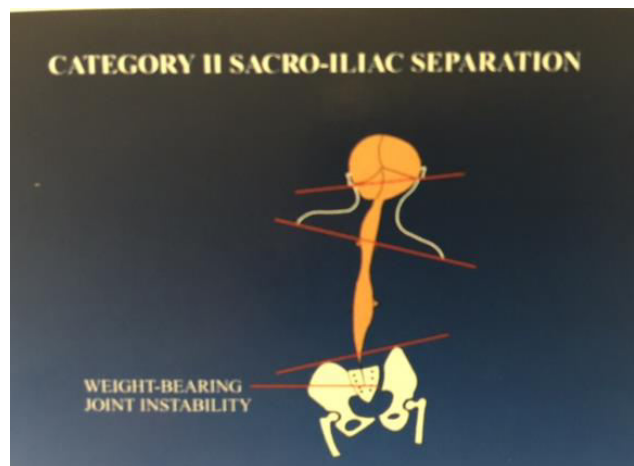


Figure 1. What happens when the ligaments loosen.

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There is not always pain, such as low back pain or pubic bone pain, but what is important to remember is that this changes the shape of what is called the pelvic inlet. If the pelvic inlet isn't symmetrical then there is less room for baby, and often times improper positioning of the baby can occur. See figure 2.

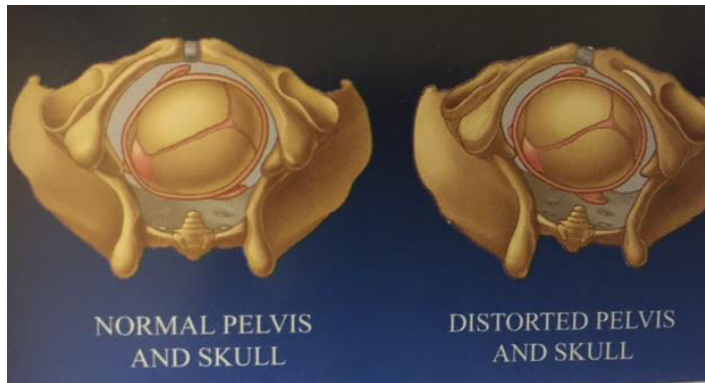


Figure 2. Distorted pelvis.

It is important for the mom to have optimal space in order for proper development and growth of the fetus. When babies aren't in the right position, and turning techniques haven't worked, not having enough space in the inlet can contribute to failure in this method. Additionally, chiropractic and natural remedies can ease a lot of pregnancy symptoms, making for a happier and healthier mom and baby.

~postpartum~

After baby is born, the ligaments just don't go back to their old self. Unfortunately there has to be some rehabilitation in the muscles surrounding the joints and healing of these ligaments in the pelvis, or else back pain and other symptoms can occur. You can even get delayed symptoms years down the road of an old sprain in your pelvis. If there was an episiotomy, this can cause pain and sometimes dysfunction such as vaginal and rectal prolapses or urinary incontinence. It's important to rehab these muscles and heal the scar tissue. Additionally, with breast feeding and carrying a little one, the back and neck can also compensate and mom's start to get the rounded shoulders, and pain.

~Birth~

Birth is a traumatic event, not only for mom, but also for baby. No matter what the birth if it was a normal vaginal, c-section, forceps or vacuum extraction, the baby's head gets compressed in the mom's pelvis and the nervous system gets disrupted. Births such as c-section, vacuum and forceps can cause significant issues not only immediately but later on in life because of the effect on the blood flow and spinal fluid getting compressed. In a normal vaginal birth, the right side of the back of the head is compressed in the mom's pelvis; and the right shoulder turns in order to get the baby out. What can happen is that mother's are usually given an induction, which is of "clinical necessity", but actually can accelerate the birth process when neither mother nor fetus are prepared. This causes a rupture of the membrane and the head of the cranium drops into the pelvis compressing the bones. Not only compression, but the proper position of the head won't be in place. See figure 3.

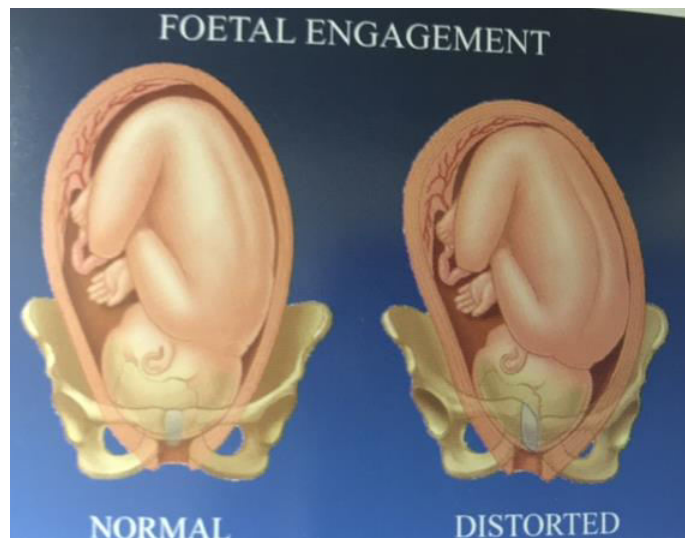


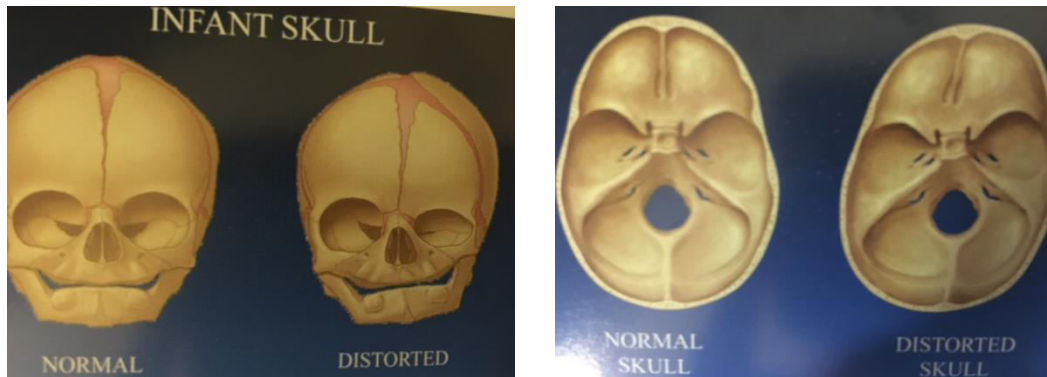
Figure 3. Distortion in the head from induction.

Additionally, the uterine contractions are violent and uncontrollable resulting in severe pain, which is then countered by an epidural. The mom no longer feels pain, but the baby does because the natural endorphins are now blocked. This pain causes them to go into distress, the doctor further increases the ptocin and can result in an emergency C section because the baby isn't descending. Even a "normal" birth can be traumatic to the little one. Descending down the

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birth canal, as well as pulling on the head and neck by doctors increases dysfunction in the nervous system.

Here is a photo of a distorted cranium, and how on the inside the membranes can distort.



This can affect how the child grows and functions. As you can imagine C-section and vacuum and forceps are far more disruptive to the nervous system. What can this cause?

Nursing/feeding difficulties, improper digestion, colic, decreased immune system, not reaching milestones, vision imbalances, and more. It's so important to check little ones out as soon as possible to ensure they are functioning optimally, as well as prevent future symptoms.

*Usually later in life people get headaches, TMJ and many other symptoms as a result of this dysfunction.

If you have any questions or would like more information, you can email directly at dr.rachelhamel@gmail.com or call the office at 408 642-8408