



# Chiropractic Newsletter

## Discover Chiropractic

### Early Warning Signs—Will you Listen or Suffer the Consequences?

#### Sign #1: Muscle Spasms/Tightness

Your spine is an intricate system of joints and bony canals that surround and protect your nervous system. Think of it as a flexible circuit breaker panel attached to the base of your brain. Your body will go to extreme measures to ensure the delicate nervous system operates without obstruction—with all circuits clear. Any potential interference to nerve function is countered by your body's compensational systems: meaning, if your spine misaligns or curves too much or too little, your muscles tighten and go into spasm in order to lesson and prevent further nerve-interfering distortions. Think of the bracing effects of your muscles as a cast or splint. Tight muscles after certain activity (gardening, exercise, prolonged sitting, etc.) should recover in a day or two. If the tightness or spasm is severe or lasts beyond a few days, chances are you have a more serious underlying problem. This is the time to act and see a doctor of chiropractic.

#### Sign #2: Pain

Pain is an outward sign that something is wrong. It's a warning, like a fire alarm or bright red dashboard "check oil" light. As with muscle tightness, it should not last more than a few days following a trigger.



Patients often state that they had pain for a few weeks, but then it went away with over-the-counter pills. A month later, it came back even worse. Prescription medication made it go away again. This scenario of ignoring persistent pain allows the problem to worsen. Keep in mind, the absence of pain, especially when drugged up, does not mean the problem no longer exists.

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At this point, the spine may be better thought of as a ticking time-bomb. It may take just a simple activity such as putting on a sock or driving for an hour and, BOOM, it goes off. This is when I often meet people. What would have been a simple fix a few months ago is now a complex problem requiring more care, potential loss of work, and far greater suffering. When pain hits (even when minor) and persists, please see a chiropractor right away.

### **Sign #3: Weakness**

As one of the more serious warning signs, weakness signifies many possible underlying issues. It can stem from pressure on a nerve supplying a muscle. When this is the case, you may notice specific symptoms such as loss of grip strength or difficulty on steps or getting in and out of your car with one leg. As discussed above, muscles may be working harder than normal to compensate for underlying spinal and nerve problems. This can result in noticeable weakness localized in a single muscle or a muscle group. It may appear as strain when lifting yourself out of a chair or when

your head feels heavier than usual. It may only show up as general feeling of fatigue— especially at the end of the day. Any prolonged sign of weakness (especially of one side or region of your body) lasting more than just a few days warrants immediate chiropractic evaluation.

Your body speaks to you on a regular basis. It does not use actual words, but offers little signs and symptoms. You can take your chances by ignoring these warnings, or be proactive. Chiropractic intervention early on provides an effective, inexpensive and comfortable solution. It can save you from debilitating pain and high medical bills. Although I am happy to help patients when problems are severe and may have been avoided for too long, it is also nice to help people early on. After all, no issue is too minor to justify a check-up.

*by B. Grace Bullock*

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