

WHY CHIROPRACTIC CARE IS A GAME CHANGER FOR YOUR CHILD *an interview with Dr. Cheney Brinkley D.C.*

I recently had the chance to chat with the amazing Dr. Cheney Brinkley who is a Doctor of Chiropractic (D.C.), as well as a certified hypnobirthing practitioner and doula. She currently practices in her hometown of Atlanta and specializes in Chiropractic care for both adults and children.

Tiffany: Thank you so much for taking time to talk with me today about Chiropractic care and how it works with babies and small children. I'm sure everyone would like to know a little bit about you, so walk us through how you became a Chiropractor and ended up where you are today.

Dr. Brinkley: OK, so, I am originally from Atlanta. I am a second generation Doctor of Chiropractic (DC). My dad is also a Chiropractor, so it's always been in my life which I think for me is really lucky. I've always had that aspect [of chiropractic] present in my life and having grown up with it, I never really thought anything different. I was actually going to be a speech pathologist since I really wanted to work with kids professionally, especially kids with special needs because they have always been on my heart. Once I finished my undergrad, it wasn't really clicking. It wasn't so much what I wanted to do anymore, it was what I thought I had to do. So in the meantime, I started working with my Dad and applying to grad school and I was like "You know what, this Chiropractic thing actually is cool! I really believe in it so why don't I try this out?" It was just the perfect fit. I ended up going to Palmer College of Chiropractic in Florida, and I immersed myself into all I could there while in school. I participated in everything from sports, to getting into all the adjustment classes, to doing, well really, everything (*she laughs*). Then I came back to Atlanta to start working. My goal was to become a sports Chiropractor. I wanted to come back home and work with local sports teams like the Atlanta Braves or the Falcons. When we were picking the mods at the end of our second year, the first few were quickly taken up by everyone based on what they wanted, but the one sticking out in my mind was with Dr. Melissa Ferranti. She was heavy in Pediatrics and was known as the "kid doctor." At first I wasn't really comfortable, but then my name was picked and she had been the doctor at the top of my list. I felt like there was a reason she kept coming up at the top, so I thought I should go for it. The first day I went in, it was babies and pregnant ladies everywhere! I realized quickly that this is what I was passionate about and it snowballed from there. I started going to Pediatric seminars and dove head first into this area. It was honestly the best thing I could've done [for my career path].



Tiffany: That's so awesome! Can you tell me a little about what kind of medical issues you treat with Chiropractic and the benefits they can provide for a child? Is it limited to bone and muscle or does it help with other ailments as well?

Dr. Brinkley: That is the really cool thing about Chiropractic that a lot of people don't know. It's not just for bone and muscle injuries, although we are really good at fixing those since we are spine specialists. The question that we always come back to and ask our patients is "What is the spine holding?" The answer? It's holding your spinal cord, which then messages to every single organ, nerve, muscle - literally *everything*. If you hurt your spinal cord, you hurt a lot of really important things. Some of the big issues we see for kids is not just when they fall and hurt themselves. We routinely see acid reflux, GERD, bed wetting, bowel issues such as constipation, latching difficulties in newborns, ear infections, etc. When I was in school, we had a case study published by the Pediatric Association about ear infections and how Chiropractic was actually more beneficial than having tubes placed in the ears. It was really cool to see the change in patients that had gone the route of having tubes placed and still had infections. Once they started Chiropractic, the infections stopped. Also, once a D.C. starts working with Pediatrics, we go to certain training classes where you start to see children with Autism, Asperger's, ADD/ADHD, Cerebral Palsy as well as kids with spectrum disorders that have amazing outcomes through Chiropractic care. It's really such a broad scope of things we see and are able to treat because we are so knowledgeable about the spine and that houses everything having to do with the body functions.

Tiffany: I also wondered, I know there are so many kids with allergies and sinus infections. Is that something that Chiropractic can help with as well?

Dr. Brinkley: Yes. It's crazy how much D.C.'s can help because we take very detailed classes where we work with the cranial bones and sinuses. Preventative care is really the best goal for these

ailments. We like to say if we can turn the power on where a child is functioning at 100%, they are not going to be sick as often because the body is working at full capacity. We never want kids to come in with pain. We will obviously treat them if they are in pain, but the goal is to keep them well adjusted regularly and functioning at full capacity so they don't have to deal with those ailments if possible.



Tiffany: Can you tell me about a specific before and after case study where a child has been helped by Chiropractic? I know we talked earlier about a case study on children with ear infections, but do you have any other examples?

Dr. Brinkley: Absolutely! There are so many it's almost hard to choose my favorite one to talk about! This one kind of sticks out to me because of the Mom's reaction. She brought in her little boy who started our care at around 3 months old. Mom comes in and basically hands me the baby immediately, obviously overwhelmed. She said "I don't know what else to do. He spits up every time he eats. He is not having normal bowel movements. I have tried everything and nothing is working." At this point, she is in tears, the baby is in tears, I'm almost in tears watching them because, you know, it's just a really hard thing to see them struggling. So we first noticed that obviously, he is healthy and getting nutrients. He just is having a terrible time with acid reflux and constipation. After doing a full assessment, we notice that he has misalignments in his neck, mid and low back. After the first treatment, I saw him 3 to 4 times a week. By the 8 to 10th visit, the baby was smiling, eating normally, sleeping normal, latching fine, having normal healthy bowel movements and everything has drastically improved. Just from doing small, very gentle adjustments, the baby was doing so much better. They had even tried acid reflux medicine prior to Chiropractic care and that didn't even help, mainly because his spine was misaligned. Once we fixed the problem, the power was turned back on and he was able to do all of those things that he should do naturally. Overall, there was less stress on the Mom, which puts less stress on the baby and things were just much easier.

Tiffany: Well that's great! I know my son had a Chiropractic adjustment within 2 hours of being born. Can you describe why that is so important for newborns? Also, do you notice a difference in immediate post-natal adjustments vs when they come in a few months later?

Dr. Brinkley: Yes. The youngest I adjusted was about 45 seconds after a vaginal, natural delivery. What we typically notice is, no matter if the baby is born naturally or via C-section, there is a lot of trauma in birth. The baby has to go through the birth canal or out of a small abdominal opening. That's a lot of work on both mommy AND baby. We have to remember that the baby is doing a lot of work too. So in most situations, the baby doesn't come out exactly perfect. Maybe there is a little kink in the neck or he is coming out sideways, or the doctor is having to help by pulling slightly on the neck or help bring the shoulders out. Even in a C-section, the babies are sometimes pulled out by the head or neck. If a D.C. can get to these babies within the first few hours or days, we are going to see much less trouble with breastfeeding, colic, or bowel issues and much more. When we are seeing babies 2 to 3 months after birth, they have been dealing with these problems for quite a while. Of course we can fix it, but the babies adjusted earlier aren't going to have to struggle for quite as long.



Tiffany: I have had several adjustments myself as an adult. They can seem intense sometimes, so after having them, I can see why people would be nervous to have their children adjusted because they are so little. Is the adjustment process different for children vs adults?

Dr. Brinkley: I know when I get adjusted, the more sounds of popping I hear, the better I feel [*she laughs*] and when most people get used to routine Chiropractic care, they love that manual adjustment of getting everything to move and go back to its place. With babies, we are going to do a lot of safe movement, but with much less pressure. That is one of the things I love about Chiropractic is that you get to see how gentle we can be, yet how much difference we can make. When we are adjusting newborns to toddlers, we are using very light pressure. There is a special

gentle tool we can use called the activator, so if you have an active toddler running around the office, I can follow them and use it as they explore. With newborns or little babies, I use the same amount of pressure that you would use to test a peach or a tomato for it's firmness. That's really all that I need to use because their bones aren't as ossified and completely formed like ours. So you won't need to hear the sounds in kids. You may hear them sometimes, and you will definitely get movement, which is great! Small children and babies will almost immediately have an awesome range of motion, breastfeed immediately or poop soon after which is always a really great sign so you know that you've done a good adjustment.



Tiffany: Haha, my son as an infant was definitely a post-adjustment pooper [laughs]! Dr. Brinkley, I want to thank you so much for all this amazing info! Is there anything else that you would like readers to know about Chiropractic that can benefit their children?

Dr. Brinkley: Well adjustments are a huge part of overall wellness, and I highly recommend them alongside making sure a child is eating a healthy diet and taking probiotics. In the perfect scenario, they are getting lots of playtime outside, running around, eating plenty of fruits and vegetables. All of these things combined with adjustments - that is when we are going to see the healthiest kids. The body is like a car; you need to have all parts functioning for it to work. As Chiropractors, we have many more skills than just adjusting patients. We can help you achieve a full life of a better functioning body and wellness. If we piece all these parts of a healthy lifestyle together, that's really when we are seeing the healthiest clients.

Stay tuned for Parts II and III where Dr. Brinkley will discuss how a Doula can help ease the birthing process as well as the importance of childbirth education and how it can change your experience.