

Support your child's emotional and physical well-being with

Craniosacral Therapy

by Amal Alaoui



ALL PARENTS work hard to keep their children free of stressful times in their childhood. However, it is a fact that from the moment our children are born, they will go on to experience different degrees of stress. This can sometimes have an impact on both their physical and emotional well-being. The stress can manifest in various ways:

- Skin disorders and flare-ups
- Nightmares
- Anxiety over school and friendships
- Bedwetting
- Compromised immune system
- Digestive problems
- Pain due to a sports injury

As parents, we can look at ways to provide a more balanced way of being for our children in order to minimise their stress. As part of an integrated approach, craniosacral therapy can play a significant role in your child's well-being, helping them to become more relaxed and happy.

What do we mean by 'balanced'?

One of the most influential systems in the body is the central nervous system, as this acts as our main "computer" controlling everything. Very closely linked to the central nervous system is the craniosacral system - the soft tissues and cerebro-spinal fluid that surround the brain and spinal cord.

The craniosacral system provides an internal milieu for the development and growth, as well as functional efficiency of the brain and spinal cord from the time of embryonic formation. It is closely related to, and influences the majority of other physiological systems in the body. As it has an extremely close relationship with the central nervous system, our craniosacral system contributes to the efficient running of our body on a day to day basis. The body is more balanced when all of this runs efficiently.

Simple things such as the body's ability to rest through sleep, as well as having healthy digestion, are important things for children to feel balanced. Equally, children also need to be able to handle stressful times, the "fight or flight" situation, in a balanced way so that they cope with the more demanding moments in life.



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However, sometimes we go through periods with too much stress, either physical or emotional, and this can play havoc on our well-being. This can happen in small children as well as teenagers.

Birth

Babies who have gone through a difficult birth may sometimes become stressed, often as a result of mechanical pressures during labour. For instance, tension in the skull, usually from compression, can keep the baby in an alert state resulting in difficulty in sleeping - not much fun for mum and dad! Other symptoms include restlessness, inconsolable periods of crying, sleep difficulties and poor feeding, as well as colic.

While the relatively soft bones of the cranium [head] can become compressed by the force of the uterine contractions during birth, it is worth noting that in most cases they return to an optimal position. If not, a midwife may suggest the parents take their baby to a craniosacral practitioner to see if they can help.

Craniosacral therapy in babies in the early postpartum period can help with breastfeeding challenges by enhancing their sucking reflex. The practitioner will gently facilitate the release of restrictions in the tissues surrounding the cranial bones and nerves, as well as facial bones. The therapy helps to release stored tension and bring back vitality.

Craniosacral therapy evaluates and respects the individual as an integrated totality. A practitioner uses non-invasive mobilisation techniques, such as light touch at the feet, sacrum and cranium. The client is fully clothed and will find the consultation very relaxing. The treatment helps to enhance the body's innate healing abilities.

Often, babies are relaxed after the treatment and may sleep well. Others become more energetic and take a few days to settle after a session!

Schoolchildren

School children may be supported with craniosacral therapy if there are unresolved birth patterns effecting a child's health and well being. In addition, a history of accidents or sports injuries, even ear or sinus problems, can put the body in a state of stress. The intention of the treatment is to provide more balance to the body and release the discomfort before such restrictive patterns in the body become issues later in life.

Craniosacral practitioners are trying to identify subtle disturbances to the free motion of the body tissues and body fluids, as well as the unrestricted flow of fundamental potency. When the body is stressed, either because of

psycho-emotional or physical reasons, the craniosacral motion will be altered, creating asymmetries or restrictions.

All children require a quality of sleep on a regular basis to maintain optimum health. Their sleep should improve if they are encouraged to feel relaxed and more balanced.

Older children

Craniosacral therapy is a comprehensive therapy which can be used effectively for the treatment of many conditions at all ages of a child's development. The challenging time that some teenagers go through can play havoc on their emotional well-being. Often they will welcome an opportunity to feel calm and relaxed.

This is also a time when they are involved in playing lots of sport, and perhaps one or two injuries to add to their portfolio! All parts of the body are connected directly and indirectly with an internal web of tissue called connective tissue. This means that an injury to the foot may also impact the upper body. Craniosacral therapy assesses the whole body to ensure all tension and restrictions are released.

During a consultation, a practitioner places his or her hands on the client to gently manipulate the spine, skull and cranial sutures to ease restricted passages of nerves and help bones return to their proper place.

A relaxed child is a happy child

Of course our body will adapt and learn to live with dysfunctions, but it is not the happiest start possible! Health is a state of balance and harmony between the body and mind. For both men and women, stress can be a big factor of many physical and emotional conditions and the same applies to children of all ages.

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