

# OPTIMAL HEALTH UNIVERSITY™

Presented by Dr. Troy H. Peters

## What Do Symptoms *Really* Mean? Part II: Internal Disorders

*As a proactive health-care provider, Dr. Peters doesn't wait for the onset of symptoms to herald the presence of disease and skeletal misalignments.*

*Why? Because doctors of chiropractic know what countless medical studies have shown over and over again: you don't need to exhibit symptoms to be sick.*



Patients can suffer from a condition known as **vertebral subluxation** and not even be aware of it — until the situation becomes severe enough to generate symptoms.

Vertebral subluxations occur when spinal movement is restricted or spinal bones (vertebrae) become misaligned. Dr. Peters corrects this common condition with safe and gentle maneuvers called **chiropractic adjustments**.

Carpal tunnel syndrome, headaches, backaches, infantile colic and ear infections are just a few of the myriad of health concerns linked with vertebral subluxations. They have even been linked to disorders of the nervous and immune system. Ongoing research suggests vertebral subluxations may also aggravate internal disorders, such as those listed below. All of these conditions have one essential factor in common: their symptoms often don't appear until well into the course of the disorder.

### Cardiovascular Disease

What does high blood pressure, heart attack and stroke have in common? They are often the first “symptoms” of cardiovascular disease. In reality, though, cardiovascular disease often begins its progression years before these outward signs are manifested. Research indicates that the arterial

plaque buildup, which leads to cardiovascular disease, begins as early as childhood.

In one study, the heart arteries of 181 heart-transplant recipients were examined two to six weeks following transplantation. The donor hearts were from people who were free of known heart disease. Nevertheless, the researchers saw well-developed atherosclerosis in the arteries of hearts from donors in all age groups — including teenagers. While 26 of the 36 heart donors between the ages of 41 and 50 had heart disease, five of the 32 donors under the age of 20 also showed signs of atherosclerosis.

“This study of individuals with no known heart disease demonstrates that heart disease begins at a very young age and well-developed plaque deposits are present in one in six teenagers,” says chief investigator, Murat Tuzcu, M.D. “...These findings should raise the public's awareness that heart disease is not just a disease of the elderly. It is a disease of both young and old. Aggressive heart disease prevention should begin in childhood, when it's easier to establish healthy habits and correct harmful ones, before the damage begins.” (*The American Heart Association Scientific Sessions in Atlanta*; November 1999.)

Doctors of chiropractic teach patients

to avert cardiovascular disease before the onset of symptoms by taking proactive measures. For example, research indicates that regular chiropractic adjustments for the correction of vertebral subluxations may lower blood pressure (*Journal of Manipulative & Physiological Therapeutics* 2001;24:101-9).

In addition, a plethora of research proves that regular exercise — coupled with a diet high in fiber and low in fat and processed carbohydrates — keeps heart disease and stroke at bay. Chiropractors counsel patients to adopt this prevention-focused lifestyle. In addition, Dr. Peters warns patients not to ignore or “cover up” the early warning signs of heart disease, such as mild high blood pressure and fatigue.

Prevention focused health-care providers, such as Dr. Peters, are particularly concerned that many men are misinformed about a critical early-warning sign of heart disease: erectile dysfunction (ED). Men with ED are encouraged by multi-million dollar pharmaceutical advertising campaigns to turn to drugs like Viagra® before investigating cardiovascular health, possibly masking symptoms of the underlying problem.

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At the American Urological Association meeting in Quebec, Dr. Steven Grover and colleagues reported their findings on this important issue — based on the evaluation of more than 4,000 men: “Our study suggests that erectile dysfunction may be an early warning sign of heart disease and stroke ... we found that the presence of cardiovascular disease was strongly associated with erectile dysfunction.”

## Diabetes

When symptoms of diabetes occur, such as eye problems and dizziness, it is often too late to ward off chronic health complications. However, the biochemical alterations leading to diabetes begin years — even decades — before patients show any signs of the disorder. Researchers at the Pediatric Academic Societies’ meeting in Seattle, Wash., warn that the blood-sugar changes triggering diabetes may begin as early as childhood, especially among obese youngsters.

“Childhood obesity not only affects a child’s self esteem, it also is associated with multiple medical consequences,” cautioned study director Teresa Quattrin, M.D. In fact, the incidence of type 2 diabetes in children has risen significantly in recent years, along with high prevalence of obesity.”

In this chiropractic office, we teach patients to stop diabetes in its tracks before symptoms start. We do this by providing ongoing nutritional and lifestyle education, based on scientific research.

## Cancer

*Joe thought he was in perfect physical health. He played softball every weekend and had just passed his physical examination with stellar results three months earlier. So, when he noticed the swollen lymph nodes along the side of his neck, he thought he had a minor virus or — worst-case scenario — strep throat. Imagine his shock when he learned he had cancer and most likely had been its host for some time; by now, it had already begun to spread to various organs throughout his body.*

Tragically, Joe’s heart-wrenching story is not unusual. He’s just one of a steadily growing legion of individuals who aren’t diagnosed until their cancer has started to spread (metastasize), therefore making it more challenging to treat.

Cancer is yet another example of a disease where symptoms rarely appear in the initial stages. The good news is that most types of cancer are preventable. That’s why we work with patients to adopt what’s known as the **chiropractic lifestyle**, a way of life focused on optimal health, which incorporates regular chiropractic check-ups, nutritional counseling, exercise modification and stress-reduction techniques.



## Alzheimer’s Disease

Alzheimer’s disease (AD) is another illness where symptoms appear late in the disorder’s course. It seems that the buildup of brain plaque associated with this condition commences well before memory problems develop.

Fortunately, ongoing research demonstrates that AD may be preventable. Chiropractors teach patients memory-boosting secrets, such as engaging in regular exercise, eating a nutritious diet and taking various dietary supplements — including antioxidant vitamins, B-complex vitamins, vitamin E and ginkgo biloba.

**Caution: Never begin a supplementation program without first consulting a doctor of chiropractic; specific sup-**

**plements may be hazardous for some people.**

In addition to diet and lifestyle recommendations, chiropractors encourage patients to keep their minds active. Scientific research suggests that engaging in intellectual pursuits reduces an individual’s odds of dementia.

For example, one study tracked 842 elderly patients. The subjects answered questions about how much time they spent engaging in common cognitive activities, such as reading, completing crossword puzzles, playing cards and visiting museums. Subjects rated how much time they spent on each activity on a five-point scale: “one” representing once a year or less and “five” representing daily participation.

During the four-year trial, 139 volunteers developed AD. Findings showed that engaging in intellectual activities slashed the odds of developing the mind-robbing disorder. Specifically, each one-point increase in the participation score was associated with a 64 percent drop in AD risk (*Neurology* 2002;59:1910-4).

## Learn to Listen to Your Body

Shhhhh. Can you hear it? “I’m thirsty.” “I’m sleepy.” “Stop feeding me junk food!”

These are just a few of the messages your body sends you every day. The challenge is learning to listen. Fortunately, chiropractors understand “body talk” and can help you sharpen your own interpretive skills.

Schedule an appointment with your doctor of chiropractic today and start listening to what your body has to say. What you hear may surprise you — and even save your life.

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