

## **What a Good Chiropractic Exam Can Reveal**

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Often patients will come in for chiropractic care with a specific complaint or complaints. During the close examination of the spine that should be done for all patients, the doctor will usually find other areas of misalignment and pain than the ones reported by the patient on the intake form or in the history/interview. This will prompt certain questions by the doctor to the patient.

Things tend to pop up as he palpates (touches) the spine. "Do you get headaches, balance problems, difficulty hearing, a full-headed feeling, ear infections or sore throat? How is your blood pressure? Do you have any anxiety or a heart arrhythmia? Do you have allergies, asthma or difficulty taking a deep breath? Have you digestive problems or high blood sugar levels? Are you taking a statin or other medication? Do you get sick often (lowered immune response)? Is there a history of uterine fibroids or ovarian cysts? Stress incontinence or, if a child, is there any enuresis (bedwetting)? Is there painful or irregular menses, infertility or constipation?"

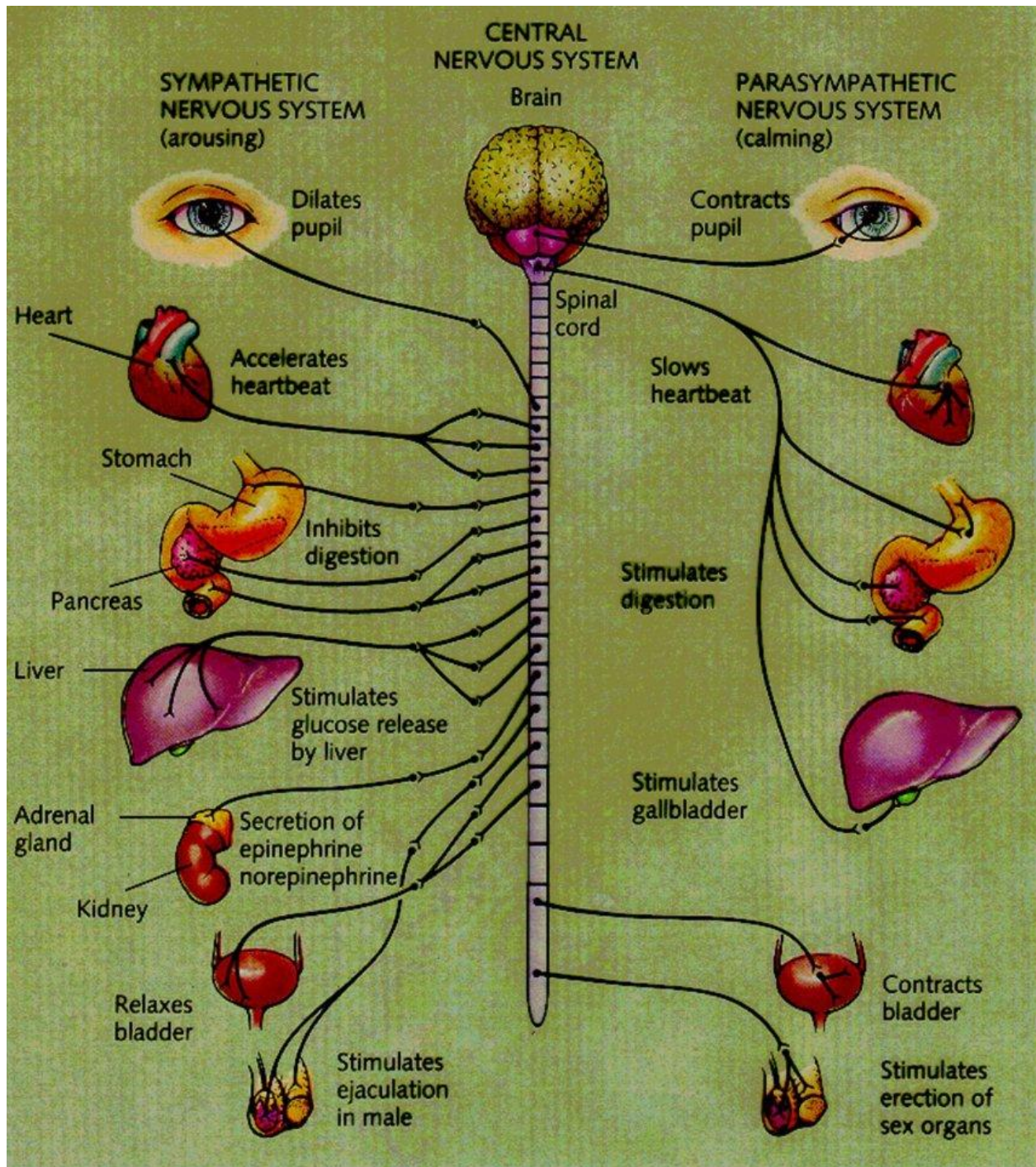
Any of these and many more problems, silent or unspoken by the patient, can be signalled (not diagnosed) by a good spinal examination and sharp set of doctor's eyes. Can a chiropractor tell you something about your health status that you didn't tell him yourself, or didn't suspect.....just by touching your spine? The short answer is YES. But how can that be? The answer is in your own physiology.

Most people are acquainted with the reality that when a nerve is disturbed in any way it will not send an accurate signal from the brain to the muscle, organ or gland it innervates/activates/controls. This is called "Efferent" nerve flow and goes from the inside >>> out, i.e. the brain to the spine, the spine to the body. Spinal misalignments can cause pain, tingling, burning, numbness and weakness in the skin and muscles. It can also cause reduced circulation to and dysfunction in the organs those nerves supply. This is called a "Somato-Visceral Response", meaning the organ is affected by a musculoskeletal problem.

But the nervous system is a two-way street. It also fires signals from the outside >>> in, i.e. from the body to the brain. This is called "Afferent" nerve flow. With this now in mind, we can introduce another very important function of the nervous system that is rarely understood: that a sick organ, even if there is no pain in it, can reflect pain and stiffness back to the spinal level that innervates it. This is called a "Viscero-Somatic Response", and it is an excellent early-warning system suggesting possible problems with our health.

Examples could be pain at C1-3 (upper neck) relating to headaches, sinus & ear infections and poor balance; pain in T1-4 (upper back) relating to anxiety, heart arrhythmias, high blood pressure, asthma and lung infections; pain at T5,6 (between the blades) relating to reflux, fat digestion, immune strength, protein digestion and blood-sugar levels; pain at T10-12 relating to UTI's and groin area; pain at L2,3 (small of the back) relating to testicular pain, erection, bladder infections, urinary incontinence and uterine fibroids/ovarian cysts; and pain at the sacrum (tailbone) relating to constipation, painful/heavy/irregular menses and infertility. Remember this is a simplified list and that your body is literally a neurophysiological concert that never stops playing!

If the chiropractor makes an evaluation that an organ may be suffering or will likely suffer soon, he will adjust the spine specifically to improve/restore function and make the appropriate medical referral if necessary. I cannot count the number of times we have screened patients and sent them for further testing based on history, presentation and spinal examination. It has literally been a life-saver. The body doesn't lie, it tells your story.



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