

Osteopathy Newsletter

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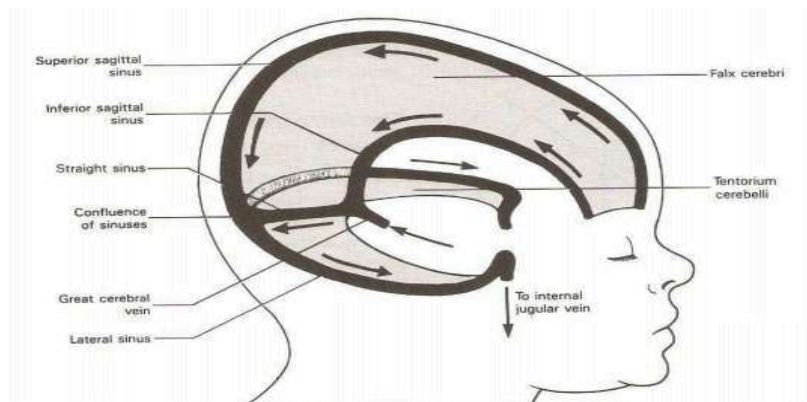
Happy Spring! We hope you are enjoying the blossoms, flowers and sunshine. It has been over a year since our last newsletter.

In our last letter we discussed the question of what is going on during Osteopathic Treatment. Specifically I talked about the role of the membranes within the cranium, and how they act as a support structure. Today I thought we would revisit this idea in a little more detail.

There is actually a sickle-shaped fibrous arch running from the middle of the forehead and the base of the nose to the back middle part of the head. Towards the back of the head this sickle shape divides into two parts forming a sort of tripod.

This tough, fibrous connective tissue acts as a spring—both absorbing force as well as diverting force from the delicate bones of the upper head to the firm bones at its base. Think of these membranes as an integrated part of the whole body and you have an idea of one way an Osteopathic Physician views the Cranium.

Below in the image the light grey areas represent this connective tissue in the cranium. Note the sickle-shaped falx cerebri running from the front to the back of the cranium. The black lines along its outer margin and inner margins are similar to large veins - actually called venous sinuses. These vessels drain almost all the blood from the cranium.



Cross-section of the fetal skull intracranial membranes and sinuses

Is it time for a tune up?

A tune up means coming in for a treatment without having obvious symptoms. Perhaps there is no ache or pain, no injury or surgery, no orthodontia or dental work requiring prompt attention. Having an Osteopathic treatment remains a good way to support health and well-being.

Timing is flexible and varies with age and stage in life. One key time for an infant or toddler is at major developmental milestones: starting to roll over, speak, crawl, walk or run. For a child key times include early Fall—to support respiratory immunity, at the end of sports seasons—to support musculoskeletal health, around major growth spurts—to support the body as growth related forces accrue, and during periods of stress—to support emotional and psychological well being. As an adult a tune up is recommended in conjunction with new/increased physical activities and during periods of anxiety, grief, or change.

A good rule of thumb is that patients of all ages will benefit from two treatments per year.

In the Big Picture

Cranial Osteopathy addresses the compressive forces from birth, position in the womb, injury, or even inflammation and infection, in gentlest fashion— bringing the tensions to a balance point where the body is more easily able to release them. The result is healthier, more pliable tissue, increased range of motion and increased fluid movement. Functional benefits may be noticed as well. These vary depending on the individual patient and the nature, location and severity of the restrictions. For example an infant with feeding difficulties may show improved tongue movement when compression is released in the region of the “nerve for the tongue” - the hypoglossal nerve—or a school age child may experience a reduction in reactivity in school and better regulation related to release of compression the membranes near the frontal and prefrontal cortex. And finally an adult might note improvement in headaches from release at the base of the head.

Well that might have been a deeper dive than needed! We wish you a wonderful summer with lots of sun and relaxation. Our office will be open throughout the summer except for a couple weeks in July, you can visit seattledo.com and click the Book Appointment button to see our availability.

