

## Family Chiropractic

Courtesy of Harbourfront Family Chiropractic  
by Dr. Warren Gage



### Arthritis

As we age, many of us start to feel pain in certain joints, particularly in the hands, hips, knees, feet and spine. This is especially common in women. A doctor might make the broad diagnosis of arthritis, an inflammation of the joint that causes pain and stiffness, but do you know that there are many different types of arthritis that fall under this very broad umbrella?

The most common type of arthritis is *osteoarthritis*, which occurs when the cartilage between the bones in the joint breaks down, becomes inflamed and causes pain as the bones grind against one another. Typical causes are loss of joint movement (fixation), repetitive use, obesity and others.

*Rheumatoid arthritis*, an autoimmune disorder of the joints that usually begins between the ages of 30 - 50, is also quite common. Symptoms include swelling, redness and a feeling of warmth, which usually begin in the small joints of the fingers, wrists and feet. More common in women than men, this condition can be very disabling, affecting one's ability to work and lead a normal life.

Chiropractic care has been shown to be effective both in preventing arthritis from occurring in the first place and in reducing pain and lack of mobility in those who already have the condition. How? Arthritis in a joint accelerates when it is subluxated (not moving properly). Then, when a person has arthritis, pain keeps them from moving. Lack of movement reduces the use of the joint and decreases range of motion, which makes the condition worse.

Chiropractic adjustments help to increase mobility in the joints, and reduce pain. They also help to slow down the progression of the arthritic condition. With pain relief, there can then be a reduction of over-the-counter and prescription pain reliever use.

Chiropractic care can also help to prevent arthritic conditions because it encourages specific behaviors and habits that contribute to an overall healthy lifestyle, such as diet, proper weight maintenance and exercise. In addition, chiropractic adjustments help to keep the spine properly aligned and the nervous system, which controls the immune system, functioning optimally. And... a healthy immune system helps to ward off all types of devastating illnesses, including arthritis.