

How do know if you are healthy?

When I ask the question, "How do you know if you are healthy?", I get similar answers every time. "Well I feel good", or "I don't have pain", and sometimes "If I'm not sick, I must be healthy". These answers illustrate the fact that we as a society perceive our health based on the way we feel. Unfortunately this assumption is gravely inaccurate. In fact it is because we think this way that America although #1 in emergency health care in the world, we only rank 72nd in health and wellness type care.

We all know someone who has either has or had a heart attack, cancer, diabetes, and or a stroke. The reason we all know someone suffering from at least one of these is because they are the top four reasons people in the United States are dying. Let us first discuss heart attacks because cardiovascular disease is the number one killer today. Let's say somebody has a heart attack on a Wednesday. What are the first signs of a heart attack? Left arm and jaw pain, difficulty breathing, chest pain, profuse sweating, etc. Well, if someone is experiencing these symptoms aren't they actually having a heart attack? That means by the time they experience any symptoms, it is too late, they are already having the attack. Here is another question. How did they feel on Tuesday, the day before the attack? Usually just fine, right? So just because they felt ok on Tuesday they assumed they were healthy, but on Wednesday we found out the truth, only it was too late.

The same is true for cancer. What is the first symptom of cancer? This is a tough one for most people because there are not many. Depending on the type of cancer it could be pain, sometimes weight loss, or fracture, and maybe blood in the stool. The problem is again by the time you are experiencing the symptoms related to the disease you are already extremely sick. Prior to the symptom, however, the person felt fine. They would say they were healthy. Both of these diseases are processes and take a long time to develop in your body. Clearly these people were sick for months or even years before they "felt" sick.

Besides acute trauma and accident almost all diseases, conditions, and problems take a long time to develop. The problem exists that we do not often feel them as they are developing. So, if the way we feel is not a good indicator of how healthy we are, how do we know? The answer lies in relying not on the symptoms we are feeling, but on the level of function of our body.

Now more than ever doctors in all fields are using functional measures to predict the future health of their patients. We have stress tests for the heart, vital capacity tests for lung function, a variety of imaging studies which allow us to see the function of our intestines, liver, and kidneys. Chiropractic in its foundation is focused on function rather than symptoms.

Although chiropractors are extremely effective in treating back pain, neck pain, and headaches, the focus is more on the prevention of ailments than the treatment of them. Chiropractic is actually a lifestyle consisting of eating well, exercising, and getting adjusted in order to live a long and healthy life.

Chiropractors are mostly concerned with the nervous system. This system is of utmost importance in the body as its job is controlling and regulating every single other process in our bodies. There is not a thought, feeling, action, pain, taste, heartbeat, or breath that happens without first being directed through the nervous system. This means in order for us to be able to function at as high a level as possible we first need our nervous system to free of interference. This is what chiropractors do, remove interference.

Interference in your nervous system is called subluxation. These subluxations are areas of the spine that due to lack of proper biomechanics add pressure to your nervous system. This pressure decreases the ability of your nervous system to communicate with the rest of the body. As communication breaks down, our other systems do not perform their functions properly. Subluxations by themselves seem to be small sometimes unperceivable problems as most of them exist without any pain or problem, but so do most diseases. When left uncorrected for long periods of time subluxations lead to other problem such as spinal degeneration, disc herniation, headaches, and a variety of organ dysfunction.

Just like with heart disease, cancer, diabetes, and stroke early detection of risk factors, and functional problems greatly reduces your chances of developing larger more serious problems in the future. We are in a new and exciting time in medicine. Living a healthy lifestyle and having proactive approach to our health care is going to not only continue to contribute to the increase we are already seeing in life span, but also dramatically increase the quality of those years. After all why live to a ripe old age if you are not going to be able to enjoy those years. Regular chiropractic treatments enable your body to age more gracefully and are a crucial piece of living a healthy lifestyle.