I just had a visit with a female patient who had gastric bypass surgery six months ago. She and I celebrated today. Not only has she lost 67 pounds, but based on her body mass index of 34, she is no longer considered morbidly obese. As her chiropractor, I have been there to support the physical changes of her body and advocate for her healthier lifestyle.

With weight-loss, her center of gravity has changed. The demands on her lower back, hips, knees, ankles and feet have changed. I adjusted her spine and joints before her surgery and continue to do so. My goal is to keep her body in balance.

I am a chiropractor who specializes in the treatment of overweight and obese children and adults. I grew up struggling with weight issues and know what it’s like to go to a medical doctor’s office and be reminded that I’m overweight. I am married to a large man and have children who also struggle with their weight. I understand the pressure to “fit in” and have experienced the frustration of someone telling me “if you could only lose some weight, you’d be fine.” In reality, losing weight is only part of the answer. It’s the unexpected changes you experience while trying to get healthier that few talk about.

I became a doctor of chiropractic because I have a passion for helping people at whatever age, shape or size. If you’re large, you know it. I don’t need to remind you of it. I do need to help you feel more comfortable in your body and hurt less. This article explains chiropractics and its benefits for the overweight and obese.

What’s it all about?

Chiropractic care is available to all ages and all sizes. Chiropractors provide hands-on, drug-free and non-surgical treatments, relying on the body’s inherent ability to heal. Doctors of chiropractic are best known for their ability to relieve back pain. But, it’s more than just spine care.

As chiropractors, we promote health, wellness, balance and active lifestyles. We provide our patients with strategies to improve their postures and help make everyday life a little easier. We help increase motion and flexibility and decrease pain in your spine and joints of the arms or legs and also treat headaches. Chiropractic care is a conservative, safe and effective option of healthcare.

The Brain/Body Connection

Your brain is your command center. It tells your body what to do by way of nerves which travel down your spinal cord into your fingers and toes. Nerves throughout your body provide information back to your brain about position, sensations and pain. Your spine protects this highway of information being sent to and from your brain and body. Any interruption of these signals can cause a traffic jam, which prevents your body from working at its optimal level. This can result in lower resistance to disease and can cause an overall loss of health.

Chiropractors pay attention to the nerves that control muscles and the impact nerves have on the mobility of joints and bones associated with them. Chiropractic adjustments
restore the function of the nerves by moving the bones of the spine into proper alignment, removing any interference and clearing the path for the body to heal itself.

**What is a Chiropractic Adjustment?**

Chiropractors are trained to treat the whole body with an emphasis on examining joints, the point of connection between two bones in the body. Chiropractors use their hands to restore movement. We use special adjustments to restore joint movement so you have less pain and can move easier. An adjustment is the application of a specific, controlled force adjacent to joints that have become restricted, feel stiff and literally get “stuck.”

**What is so Important about Joints?**

Weight-bearing joints in the body, including the hips, knees, ankles and the lower back, are sometimes stressed with weight gain. Even a 10 pound weight-loss or gain can have an impact on your balance and alignment. Chiropractic care can help you regain balance so that you can continue with your movement of choice, at whatever size, and have less pain throughout your weight-loss.

I have a male patient who is 6’3” and 380 pounds. At the age of 50, he decided to make some lifestyle changes in order to get healthier. He had been a former athlete whose active lifestyle changed, eating more as life became more stressful. Through his 30’s and 40’s, his medical doctor warned him of the negative side effects associated with being overweight and his doctor prescribed medication for high blood pressure, high cholesterol and diabetes.

Soon, he found the medications had side effects, leaving him tired and sore. He needed a change. He shared with me how discouraging it had been to try to exercise and then have his body scream at him for walking only 20 minutes on a treadmill. In our first meeting, he shared, “If I’m supposed to move, I’m going to hurt. If I’m going to hurt, I won’t want to do it.”

The frustration in his voice was evident as he described the struggle with the pain in his ankles, knees and hips. He knew it was the right thing to do, but it seemed impossible for him to continue. He had a long history of trying to exercise, lose weight and be healthier but it didn’t lead him to a more active lifestyle, instead it led him to be more sedentary because of the pain he experienced. His stomach couldn’t handle daily ibuprofen. He came to me for help.

After an examination, I discovered he had several joints in his spine that weren’t moving and were the source of his daily headaches, muscle spasms in his upper back and shoulders and pain in his low back and hips. In addition, his ankles and knees were out of alignment. I adjusted his spine and affected joints. I gave him stretches to do while at home and we discussed his treatment plan that outlined my expectations for his reduction in pain and his return to balance. Today, he is able to walk on the treadmill for 45 minutes without ankle pain. He continues to add strengthening exercises and a variety of activities back into his life and has lost weight.

Time and again I have patients who come to me in the same position asking, “How can I exercise, lose weight and get healthy if the process hurts so much?” That’s where chiropractic care can help. It can help your body stay in alignment and reinforce your personal motives for weight-loss or more activity.

**How Do I Find a Chiropractor Who Can Help Me?**

Chiropractors treat patients in all 50 states. You can find them online or in the phone book, and insurance companies have lists of providers. Personal referrals from friends are a good way to find a chiropractor. Some specialize in children, geriatrics, pregnancy, nutrition, sports injuries or family
care. You may need to visit several clinics before you find the “right” one, as no two chiropractors will care for you the same. It’s not a “one-size-fits-all” approach to healthcare.

You’ll know when you’re in the right place. If you go into a clinic and the chiropractor says something like, “you’ve got a lot of mass,” you’re in the wrong place. It’s not just about weight. It’s about being comfortable and finding balance, whether you’re 100 or 600 pounds.

About the Author:

Marcia Krueger, DC, is the owner of Innate Ability Chiropractic in a suburb of Minneapolis, MN. Dr. Krueger is also a proud member of the OAC. To contact her, email MAKruegerDC@comcast.net or call (952) 746-5199.
The OAC is the ONLY non-profit organization whose sole focus is helping those affected by obesity. The OAC is a great place to turn if you are looking for a way to get involved and give back to the cause of obesity.

There are a variety of ways that you can make a difference, but the first step is to become an OAC Member. The great thing about OAC Membership is that you can be as involved as you would like. Simply being a member contributes to the cause of obesity.

**Why YOU Should Become an OAC Member**

Quite simply, because the voice of those affected needs to be built! The OAC not only provides valuable public education on obesity, but we also conduct a variety of advocacy efforts. With advocacy, our voice must be strong. And, membership is what gives the OAC its strong voice.

**JOIN NOW**

Complete the below application now!
For more information, visit the OAC Website at www.obesityaction.org.

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**Membership Application**

**Yes!** I would like to join the OAC’s efforts. I would like to join as a/an:

- [ ] Individual Member: $20/year
- [ ] Professional Member: $50/year
- [ ] Physician Member: $150/year
- [ ] Institutional Member: $500/year
- [ ] Chairman’s Council: $1,000 and up/year

**Name:** ____________________________

**Company:** ____________________________

**Address:** ____________________________

**City:** __________ **State:** ______ **Zip:** __________

**Phone:** ______ **Email:** ____________________________

**Payment Information**

Enclosed is my check (payable to the OAC) for $ ________.

Please charge my credit card for my membership fee:

- [ ] Discover®
- [ ] MasterCard®
- [ ] Visa®
- [ ] Amex®

**Credit Card Number:** ____________________________

Expiration Date: __________ **Billing Zip Code:** __________

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**Membership Categories and Benefits**

The OAC wants YOU to be a part of what we do. No matter how you’re impacted, having individuals join our efforts who believe in making a difference is essential. That’s why the OAC offers various member categories, so you can get involved at your desired level.

Several valuable benefits also accompany your OAC membership. Each membership category offers something different. Here are some of the core benefits to membership:

- Official welcome letter and membership card
- Annual subscription to the OAC’s magazine
- Subscription to the OAC’s members-only monthly electronic newsletter
- Periodic member alerts informing you of issues that need action/attention
- Ability to lend your voice to the cause
- Representation through advocacy

**Mail to:**

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4511 North Himes Ave., Ste. 250
Tampa, FL 33614

**Or Fax to:** (813) 873-7838