

Babies and Children

What is Craniosacral Therapy?

Imagine a jellyfish expanding and contracting as it moves through the water. A similar, but far more subtle pulsation exists in human beings. This was discovered at the turn of the century by an American Osteopath, who was intrigued that the bones of the skull were joined in a manner which was designed to accommodate movement. The Cranial Rhythm, as this pulsation has become known, arises out of the Central Nervous System and the Cerebrospinal Fluid that surrounds it. It can be felt throughout the body's tissues and is fundamental to the healthy functioning of all the other body systems. When the rhythm becomes restricted or blocked, discomfort and, eventually, disease processes set in. Craniosacral Therapy is a gentle way of working with the body that utilises the Cranial Rhythm in a diagnostic and therapeutic way.

What do Craniosacral Therapists do?

Using a very light touch Craniosacral Therapists are trained to detect disturbances in the rhythm and resolve them. This is not done through direct manipulation, but by stimulating the Cranial Rhythm in such a way that encourages a return to normal functioning. Parents are often surprised that so a light touch can produce such profound results. This is because, although the practitioner's touch is light, it is not superficial. It is interacting with the Cranial Rhythm in a focused way, hence facilitating a return to healthy functioning from the core to the periphery of the body.

Why is Craniosacral Therapy especially relevant to babies and children?

- Craniosacral Therapy is non-invasive. Clothes and nappies do not have to be removed for the treatment to be effective. Babies may already have had to endure many invasive procedures and building a rapport with the child is considered essential to a good treatment
- It is gentle. Babies often begin to smile and visibly relax during treatment.
- Following birth babies may be left with unresolved patterns of compression and shock. This is especially true when the birth has been traumatic, requiring interventions such as forceps, ventouse extraction or caesarean sections. But even the easiest birth may leave some stress and compression.
- Colic, which is extremely distressing to both baby and parents, is often dismissed as normal or untreatable. However, many babies are effectively relieved of colic by Craniosacral Therapy.
- Many conditions that might otherwise require surgical intervention or drugs, along with their unpleasant side effects, can be resolved with Craniosacral Therapy.
- By tackling difficulties before they become chronically anchored, Craniosacral Therapy enhances healthy growth and future development. This paves the way to greater self-esteem and well being throughout childhood and into later life by freeing up the bodies resources for more creative and purposeful uses.

What sort of birth related and childhood conditions do Craniosacral Therapists treat?

Craniosacral Therapists do not focus on specific conditions, but on the underlying health of the body as expressed by the Cranial Rhythm. By working with this deep rhythmic impulse general health is enhanced and specific conditions resolve as the therapist restores Craniosacral motion to areas of restriction.

However there are some specific conditions that Craniosacral Therapy is known to be especially effective in treating. These include: colic, ear infections, weakened immunity, disturbed sleep, irritability, restlessness, sucking and feeding problems. These problems often result from craniosacral imbalances incurred during the birth process.

Other more deeply rooted conditions that often have their roots in birth trauma and have responded well to Craniosacral Therapy include: asthma, autism, behavioural and emotional problems, cerebral palsy, dyslexia, epilepsy, hyperactivity, squints and visual disturbances.

Is it worth having my baby checked up even if there are no symptoms?

It is recommended that all babies are given a Craniosacral check-up soon after birth, just to make sure there are no residual problems that might compromise future healthy growth. Regular check ups every 3 months for babies and 6 months for children are recommended to maintain optimal health and well-being.

Can older children benefit from Craniosacral Therapy? Yes, children (and adults) of all ages can benefit from Craniosacral Therapy. This may be in regard to earlier birth patterns or also to other problems that have arisen during later childhood.

- With ever increasing academic pressures, environmental pollution, food additives, the fast pace of a quickly changing world, constant media exposure to suffering and violence and less opportunity to discharge tension through playing outside, children today are perhaps under more stress than ever before. Tension can build up inside the body, leading to reduced physiology, which in turn makes it more difficult to process toxins, leading to reduced immunity, further tensions, irritability, poor concentration and variety of physical symptoms. Craniosacral Therapy can help to break this vicious circle and restore balance, hence improving the child's ability to cope with everyday stress.

- Accidents such as crashes, falls or fractures can leave structural imbalances, which Craniosacral Therapy can address, by releasing the underlying stress patterns held in the tissues.

- Post-operative or dental trauma often lead to craniosacral imbalances that have wide ranging effects throughout the whole system. These can lead to restricted movement, headaches, digestive problems, mood changes and other problems. With Craniosacral Therapy it is possible to trace these symptoms to their source and treat them.

Does Craniosacral Therapy have any side effects?

As Craniosacral Therapy does not impose upon the body, but stimulates it's inherent capacity for health, side effects do not arise. However, as the body shifts from states of disease to states of health there may be a period of adjustment in which things are a bit unsettled. This usually lasts for a day or two only.

How long are sessions and how many will my child need?

Sessions for babies and children may range from an average of thirty to fifty minutes, depending on the needs of the individual. The number of sessions needed may vary from a single session to many. It is often valuable to give the body time to respond and then to review the situation. True healing is a living process, not a mechanical adjustment, as with a car. To reap the full benefits of Craniosacral Therapy it is usually worth having several sessions to allow the process to deepen and for the body to integrate the changes it has made.

Can Craniosacral Therapy be beneficial during pregnancy?

With new and ever changing stresses being put on the body throughout pregnancy it is important to maintain a balanced state of health. Early in pregnancy the body attempts to discharge toxins in the form of morning sickness. Craniosacral Therapy can aid the detoxification process, thereby reducing morning sickness. Treatment can also help with back problems, as the weight of the growing baby puts strain upon the spine, improving hormonal balance, enhancing energy levels, easing tensions and restrictions, all of which aid the process of pregnancy and prepare the mother for greater ease during birth. As well as these effects on the mother, treatment has a direct effect on the foetus as any restrictions or imbalances effecting the uterine environment are eased.

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