Recent scientific studies support what chiropractors have recommended to their patients for over 100 years. I’ve been a chiropractor for nearly twenty five years and I was a chiropractic patient for probably 15 years before that. One thing that is common in the chiropractic profession is the notion of preventative care through first spinal correction, then spinal maintenance. It makes sense to maintain your spine. We maintain our cholesterol, work to maintain our blood pressure try to maintain our weight, but often we neglect our spine. I have personally recommended spine correction and spinal maintenance care to thousands of patients over the year and I get my spine checked and corrected often. Until recently, I made these recommendations based on common sense. However there have been 4 important studies that confirm and strengthen my recommendations. (1-4) Just like you would expect, when the spine is in poor alignment it breaks down and wears out. We now call this spinal decay. Check out the x-rays below in Figure one. They show spinal decay as a result of poor alignment. The good news is that the modern techniques of spinal correction available in our office make correcting the spine and reducing spinal decay better and faster than ever (see Figure two). So you don’t have to maintain your spine, but I highly recommend it. It really is a simple and smart thing to do!

What the posture looks like on the outside is a pretty good indication of what’s going on inside.
Spinal balance: “Don’t miss out on preventing spinal decay.”

What you see on the outside lets you know what’s happening on the inside!

In good spinal balance the shoulders and hips should be level. The head should line up over the pelvis like in the illustration on the left. The photo on the right is an actual patient from our practice. Is it any wonder she had neck and lower back pain? Spinal misalignments like these initiate spinal decay.

From the side, good spinal balance looks like the illustration on the left. Our patient, pictured to the right, demonstrates anterior head syndrome with poor spinal balance. She developed a severe scoliosis as a result of her anterior head syndrome. Recent research suggest that she is at risk for accelerated spinal decay.

Reducing head forward syndrome helps to prevent the “hump” you see in so many women as they age. The patient who’s x-rays are pictured to the left will be much less likely to develop rounded shoulders and poor structure as she ages. Now of course we look better with normal spinal alignment, but we also know that better spinal alignment delays or stops spinal decay. This is valuable for our overall health and well being. Without a strong and balanced spine, our entire frame will degenerate and collapse. However one study surprised even me. Although they weren’t sure why, researchers writing in a recent issue of the Journal of the American Geriatric Society (2004), found that forward head misalignment was actually correlated with increased mortality in senior citizens.(6) So it appears that proper spinal alignment does more than just help you look and age better.

Specific spinal adjustments like the ones we use in our office can and do help to correct poor spinal balance. The radiographs above, show one of our patients who suffered from anterior head syndrome. The radiograph to the far left (marked pre) is before we treated him. His spine is 43 Millimeters too far forward / anterior. The radiograph to the right (marked post) shows the same patient after we help correct his spine back towards normal. His anterior head syndrome was reduced by more than 20 millimeters! This correction will reduce demands on the neck and upper back muscles and may according to research arrest or retard the development of arthritis and spinal decay.

References

6. Hyper-kyphotic Posture Predicts Mortality in Older Community Dwelling Men and Women: A Prospective Study J Am Geriatrics Society 52 (Oct 2004 10) pg1662