

Osteopathy – What is it? Is it right for you and your child?

Kirsten Hannan, Osteopath, shares with us what osteopathy is and how it can offer a pain free and medication free solution to various health problems. She is also happy for you to e-mail her any particular questions or queries you may have.

Osteopaths use gentle manual (hands-on) techniques to diagnose and treat a wide variety of health problems in all stages of life: from new born to adults. Their aim is to restore the body's natural ability to heal itself.

Osteopaths assist, accelerate and enhance the natural healing process by gently working with the body's structure, as well as providing advice on diet, exercise and posture. Before any treatment is begun, osteopaths prepare a comprehensive case history and complete an examination of the patient, including medical tests, thereby determining if osteopathic treatment is appropriate.

Cranial Osteopathy involves extremely gentle but specifically applied adjustments to the movements of the tissues within the bones of the skull and throughout the body. This helps babies and children adjust to stresses and strains, encouraging healthy growth and development.

Some common problems to look out for in babies and children include reflux, colic and wind, respiratory and ear infections, unusual head shapes and growing pains. Osteopathy can assist in the treatment of these conditions, as well as problems in adults such as discomfort during pregnancy, postural strain, sports injuries and digestive problems.

Diagnostic techniques used by osteopaths? Osteopaths use their hands to palpate the tissues; through palpation they are usually looking for the normal breathing movement, for the cranial rhythmic impulse, etc. They may also use orthopedic testing and if the problem is very serious they will be able to refer the patient to the appropriate doctor.

How do you resolve constipation in toddlers? Through massage techniques to mobilize the bowel and address the parts of the body's structure that relate to the nerve supply of the bowel. Osteopaths can also provide advice on diet.

What is the difference between cranial osteopathy and cranial-sacral therapy? Osteopaths have a minimum of five years training, including normal physiology, pathology and clinical diagnosis, whereas cranial-sacral therapy is a shorter diploma course. For this reason the latter will not be equipped with the same knowledge to identify, treat and manage the health problem.

How would a 6 month old baby with an unusual head shape usually respond to a treatment? The fontanelles don't close until the second year of age so the skull is very responsive to treatment.

What kind of prevention for ear and nose infections can osteopaths offer? Osteopaths can help to drain the sinuses as well as resolve strains in the tissues surrounding the ear that can cause blocking or dysfunction of the Eustachian tube, which drains the ear.

How many treatments could we expect to notice a positive difference? We usually see a positive difference after three or four sessions; in some cases it can take a couple more sessions. It is possible to see a noticeable improvement after the first session. By the end of the treatments we expect the problem to be resolved or at least manageable through exercises. In that case we space out the sessions until the problem is resolved or keep a review every 3 to 6 months.

My child is 6 years old with a history of ear infections and grommets. Can osteopathy help at this age if they haven't outgrown the problem? Yes. Osteopathy can help to drain the sinuses as well as resolve strains in the tissues surrounding the ear that can cause blocking or dysfunction of the Eustachian tube, even in older children.

To find out more about osteopathy contact kirsten@osteopathichealthcare.com.sg or log onto www.osteopathichealthcare.com.sg