

# The Wellness Express

Jump on the train to good health

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## Chiropractic and Autoimmune Diseases

Presented by:

Imagine you had a little army inside you that was hired to protect you against foreign invaders. Any unwelcome guests that made it past your borders (i.e. bacteria, viruses or other toxins) would be identified, isolated and ushered out expeditiously by these soldiers to keep your inner environment safe and sound.

This is actually how your immune system works. It is an organized system of cells and organs that are constantly monitoring the status of your body, diligently working to ensure that your body stays healthy.

Now, imagine what would happen if those same soldiers that were organized to protect you turned their guns against you. Unfortunately, this kind of thing does happen in the body – it is called an autoimmune reaction – and it is not uncommon. There are over 80 different disorders that are classified as autoimmune diseases.<sup>1</sup> Some, like asthma and vitiligo, involve only one organ or system. Others, like lupus and fibromyalgia, involve multiple systems in the body.

According to the National Institutes of Health, more people suffer from an autoimmune disease than those who suffer from cancer or heart disease.<sup>2</sup>

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And the cost to treat autoimmune disorders is almost double the costs associated with cancer. Much more attention should be given to this collection of disorders to find a cure.

### What Causes Autoimmune Disease?

The cause of most autoimmune diseases remains a mystery. However, experts in the field of immunity generally point to two major contributors. The first is genetics, and the second is environment.<sup>3</sup>

A family-related predisposition for autoimmune disease has been well documented. If one person in your family suffers from an autoimmune disorder, you are 2 to 5 times more likely to also suffer from this disorder.<sup>3</sup> And many studies using identical twins have confirmed the genetic connection. If one twin suffers from an autoimmune disease, the other twin is more likely to also develop an autoimmune disorder than the other members of the family.

However, since not all sets of identical twins will end up with the exact same autoimmune diseases, there must be other factors that contribute to the onset of such conditions. For certain autoimmune diseases, specific environmental triggers appear to play a role.

### Exercise of the Week

Lateral Flexion :

Difficulty: Easy-Moderate

*(Consult your chiropractor before doing this or any other exercise.)*

Start: Standing.

Exercise: Place legs apart, and put one hand on side of leg (for support, if necessary). Slide hand down legs as far as you can go, tilting sideways. Let lower back muscles relax. Stop at point you feel resistance to movement, but no pain. Hold for 15-30 seconds. Return to standing. Repeat 5-10X



For instance, experts already know that exposure to silica can induce scleroderma, and that certain pharmaceutical agents are linked to the onset of diseases like lupus.<sup>3</sup>

Proper nutrition, exercise and stress management are some of the ways you can increase your chances of avoiding these diseases, or at least to minimize their symptoms.

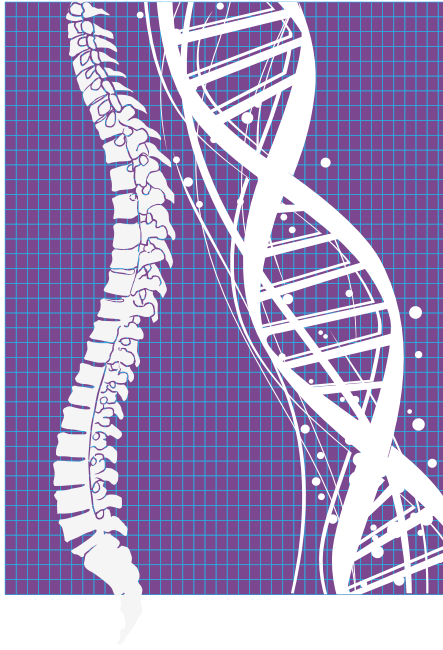
## What Treatments Are Available?

Traditional medicine focuses on a pharmaceutical approach. By knowing what organs and systems are affected by the disease, medical intervention aims at decreasing the damage to these tissues. Unfortunately, many of these approaches involve some type of immunosuppressant drug, which can reduce your body's ability to fight other forms of illness. This can make you more susceptible to chronic infection and fatigue. And it leaves you vulnerable to a number of other problems that may arise as a result of the treatments.

Chiropractic is a natural approach to fight autoimmune disease. Whereas traditional medicine focuses on the disease itself and how to minimize the symptoms, chiropractic focuses on the person with the disease. Chiropractors work with their patients to maximize their innate potential to heal themselves and improve physiological function.

As the spine surrounds and protects the nervous system, any abnormality of the spine (i.e. vertebral subluxation) can potentially irritate this collection of sensitive nerve fibers. Irritation within the nervous system can disrupt normal brain-body communication and create dysfunction and disease of any organ or tissue supplied by this system.

Chiropractic adjustments are very specific and are designed to restore proper vertebral alignment and position. This is why persons with autoimmune diseases often report incredible benefits from chiropractic care.



When the nervous system is free from interference and the musculoskeletal system moves more freely (two of the most common benefits experienced after the chiropractic adjustment), patients have a greater sense of ease, being able to move more effectively and efficiently. In addition, with brain-body communication free of irritation and interference, the natural function of every organ and system in the body is optimized.

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## Quote to Inspire

"The greatest healing therapy is friendship and love."

- Hubert H. Humphrey

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