



Dr. Rick Thompson DC CACCP

Your Child's First Visit

Most healthcare decisions are typically made by moms. Think about it, when was the last time dad took the kids to the chiropractor, eye doctor, dentist or pediatrician? (Lets face it guys, it is usually mom who forces us to go to the doctor!)

I want moms to feel absolutely comfortable with their children when seeing a pediatric chiropractor. I always get asked about what is involved in a typical pediatric chiropractic exam and what should be expected, so, here it goes!

As in any other professional health care office, there is paperwork, lots of it! Believe it or not, the forms are very important and there actually is a reason for all of it. They ask about mom's pregnancy, if it was high risk or not and what the delivery was like. They also ask about any medical interventions or tests such as ultrasounds, epidurals and medications etc.. The form also asks about the APGAR score which is a score given immediately after birth and at five minutes. The optimal score is a "10", anything less may indicate some type of trauma or distress that the child may have endured. Then the forms ask about falls, traumas, illnesses, medications and surgeries.

When all the paperwork is done (finally! Actually it is not that bad) a consultation with the doctor follows.

I absolutely love this aspect of a child's visit. I use it to gain as much information as I need to get an idea of what is causing the child's problem. The emphasis is not so much on the symptoms the child may have but on what may be causing them.

As most children, especially the really young ones, are generally not very happy seeing yet another doctor, I tend to approach this visit as play-time. The child is reassured that there are no shots here! Wrong doctor! It is not uncommon for me to sit with the child on the floor or on my lap as I'm taking my notes.

I use a small spinal model to illustrate how the spine affects the way the central nervous system works and how it can have an affect on overall health. "It turns the power off," I say and then ask, "What do you think is better, power on, or power off?" They always get the right answer!

The consultation is followed by an examination in which the child gets to put on small animal print gown. At our office, all of the doctors have the parents help with most of the examination and we guide them through it. It's important that parents actually participate in the exam so that they can feel and see what I feel and see. Yes, moms are pretty good at it as well! Dr. Mom!

I will point out any signs of possible spinal curvatures starting, the manner in which the pelvis works when the child walks and how that affects the function of the knees, feet and balance. Posture and overall body function are also evaluated.

Measurements of the two sides of the head are taken-they should be the same. If not, this could indicate cranial moulding-a possible result of a difficult delivery. Facial symmetry is also noted for the same reason as well as the temporomandibular joint (TMJ).

A number of neurological tests are generally done to let me know how the nervous system is functioning and to detect any possible malfunction.

On the child's next visit he or she is then taken through a number of sophisticated computer scans where an infrared thermal scanner runs down the spine to assess the function of the autonomic nervous system-the "autopilot" part. If the child is over five years of age we will also use our electro-interstitial scanner (EIS) that helps assess overall body physiology.

Depending on the age of the child and the results of the various tests, an x-ray examination may be performed to provide further information. We use what is called rare earth cassettes, high speed film and a tube distance of 72". All this techno-babble simply means that your child is absolutely safe having x-rays taken. The dosage is extremely low and safe, so no worries here.

That's it! The exam is thorough and very precise. The next visit is then scheduled where the doctor will go over the results of the exam in great detail, but in terms you totally understand. That is the visit in which the doctor will let mom know if we will accept the case and what exactly will be done to correct the problem.

Dr. Rick Thompson is the highest credentialed chiropractic pediatric specialist in the Omaha area with over 10 years of experience.