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"treating the cause of your problem, not just the symptoms"

Another Cause of Back Pain

There are many different potential causes of pain in the lower back. Two of the more common ones are the joints of the spine and a degenerated/herniated disk. Both of these can cause irritation of the nerves and produce a referred pain further down the leg (sciatica). However, another very common one that is often misdiagnosed by some practitioners is the "sacroiliac joint". It is actually the joint between the "sacrum" and "ileum" bones located at each side of the pelvis and not in the spine at all (see diagram).



At one point in time, it was thought that this joint did not move at all and was not a source of pain. A recent study has disproved this theory. The researchers in this study injected "freezing or anesthetic" specifically into this joint in people with low back pain. They used x-rays to be sure the needle was actually inside of the "sacroiliac joint". Once the anesthetic was given time to take affect, the low back pain was significantly better and then returned when the anesthetic wore off. Although it was not a cure for their back problem, it clearly demonstrated that the sacroiliac joint should be added to the list of possible causes of acute and chronic low back pain.

Problems with the sacroiliac joint are one of the most common causes of acute low back pain that I see in my office. It can occur in the absence of any heavy lifting or accidents. When sore, you will feel the pain two to three inches to one side from the

middle of the low back. It can even occur on both sides at the same time. The nerves that control pain in this joint can cause pain to be referred to the hip, groin, and leg (see diagram). As well, strong and painful muscle spasms can accompany the pain in the joint.

Research has also shown that the fastest way for any joint to heal, particularly in the low back and pelvis, is to restore the movement or mobility of the joint. All the joints in your body are designed to nourish themselves, remove swelling, and heal after injury. But, for this to occur, the joint has to be able to move properly. In cases of low back pain, the joints become very “stiff or jammed”. It is the job of the chiropractor to do “adjustments” to restore and maintain this movement, allowing it to heal. If you would like more information on how doing adjustments helps the joint to heal, look at the “what does a chiropractor do?” section of our website (www.merrittchiro.com) or drop by the office for a photocopy.