

Dr. Colin Gage

Nicola Valley Chiropractic
2076A Granite Ave.
P.O. Box 909
Merritt, BC
V1K 1B8

Ph: (250) 378-5456
Fax: (250) 378-8259
Email: info@merrittchiro.com
Website: www.merrittchiro.com

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

Ever Get a Charlie Horse in Your Neck?

Last week was an unfortunate week for three people who came to see me. They woke up one morning just like any other day but something was drastically wrong. I'll let one of them tell their story.

"Upon awakening this morning, I discovered that my neck was contorted sideways over to the left. I sleep on my side and as I attempted to lift my head and shoulder from the bed and pillow I found it to be very difficult and acutely painful. My head felt like a foreign object made out of concrete, heavy to maneuver. Just imagine waking up and discovering that your chin had somehow become painfully kinked, and then super glued to your left shoulder."

"As the day progressed, I realized that the pain was not isolated in the neck area. I was experiencing discomfort on my left side of my body from the back of my head, into my neck and shoulder, and traveling downwards to my middle back."

"Unable to go work, I begged to be squeezed in to see my medical doctor. He seemed concerned that I may have injured myself in a fall or an accident and that x-rays might be in order. I explained that the night before I felt just fine and that I did not have a fall or accident of any kind. He prescribed some muscle relaxers and told me to get back to him if it didn't get better. After two days and a sleepless night, I decided that the muscle relaxers were not solving my problem. One of my friends told me to try seeing a chiropractor"

When I examined this poor young lady, her head was still "stuck" in a sideways and rotated position. I explained to her that likely a few of the joints in her neck had become progressively restricted in their individual movement. This is usually due to over or underactivity, poor posture, and sometimes a recent accident or fall. The stiff joints alone are not that painful, but they are vulnerable to become very sore and acutely inflamed when challenged or stressed. It is likely that this poor woman just slept with her neck in an awkward position, causing the vulnerable joints to flare up. Thus, when she woke up, her neck muscles were in acute spasm and the joints of her neck were "stuck" in one position.

As I initially mentioned, I had three people with this problem come in on that day alone. It is called "acute torticollis" and it is more common than you might think. In regards to chiropractic treatment, first I have to release some of the spasm in the muscles with various soft tissue

techniques. Then, the joints have to be mobilized or manipulated in order to restore their proper motion. This is done repetitively over days to a few weeks depending on how long it takes for the person to heal.

If you just take painkillers or muscle relaxers alone, without addressing the lack of mobility in the joints of the neck, you are simply vulnerable for it to happen again the next time the neck is stressed. Like I always say, treat the cause of the problem, not just the symptoms! If you have any questions or if your neck is feeling stiff and possibly vulnerable to flaring up acutely, feel free to call me at my office.