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Hi everyone,

Like everyone in NZ Jodie and I have been shocked and saddened by the recent earthquake in Canterbury. We're lucky that we don't know anyone seriously injured, missing or worst killed; however I have been amazed at the emotional toll I have been feeling. I know I can't be the only one to be affected like this, especially with the constant media coverage, so we have decided to dedicate this issue to STRESS. We aim to give you an understanding of the different stressors we are constantly exposed to and the links between emotional and physical stress.

At times of stress it's really important to look after your body, even though it may often seem like the least important thing. A fully functional spine will relieve pressure from your nervous system and help you cope better – physically and emotionally. Take care everyone, and hope to see you in for a wellness checkup soon.

-Dr Michelle Dickinson



## Stress drives us N.U.T.S.

Wellness is not only about physical health. Mental and emotional health and wellbeing is an important part of ones overall balance and happiness in life. Fortunately we know that people under chiropractic care are able to adapt and respond to stress better than most due to having a more efficiently adaptive nerve system. However, life still happens, and even the best of us can feel overwhelmed and stressed at times.

Perhaps the least helpful thing anyone can say to a person under stress is 'You need to learn to manage your stress better.' In life, we need specific tools which can help us to address our triggers. A very useful concept developed by the Douglas Institute for Mental Health is the N.U.T.S. paradigm.

It has been found that for a situation to be stressful for an individual, it has to contain one or more of the following elements:

**Novelty:** Something new you have not experienced before.

**Unpredictability:** Something that happens without warning.

**Threatening:** A threat to your life, livelihood, loved ones, ego or self esteem.

**Sense of Control:** Something over which you feel you have little or no control.

Take time out each day to think about those things that you have found stressful that day. What were the key elements of the stress that most drove you N.U.T.S? Once you know which aspect is most stressful to you, you can create a plan to minimise those features and reduce the impact of the situation. A well-defined problem is a problem almost solved. We cannot always control stresses in life, but we can choose how we respond to them.

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## Chiropractic in 250 words or less

Aches and pains, symptoms and general lack of wellbeing may be all signs that your body isn't working correctly. Your body works through the control of your brain, spinal cord and all your nerves. Your nerve system controls every system of your body; including endocrine (hormones), cardiovascular (heart and respiratory), genito-urinary (reproductive and urinary), dermatological (skin), immunological (immune system) digestive and musculoskeletal systems.

Physical, chemical and emotional stresses produce a defensive, biomechanically altered posture. Your muscles contract, locking spinal joints that stretch, compress or irritate nearby nerves.

Lack of nerve system integrity and function sets the stage for disease and ill health. A thorough examination helps chiropractors find subluxations: loss of nerve system and surrounding joint and muscle function.

Applying a precise force to altered spinal patterns (subluxation) helps the body to correct itself. Typically health improves as repeated visits restore nerve system integrity. This is how chiropractic care helps millions to get well and stay well.

The benefits of chiropractic care are wide ranging and varied. They can include increased energy, higher resistance to colds, decreased allergies, better co-ordination, increased ability to concentrate, and improved ability to respond to stress. The greatest benefit of chiropractic care may well be the stories that we do not hear; of people who did not get sick; of those whose immune systems functioned better and whose bodies did not succumb to illness because they were under chiropractic care.

## How do we get "Sick"?

Disease doesn't just happen...it develops for a reason.

When we encounter a stress that our body can't adapt to, our body responds by "short circuiting" some areas of nerve system function, in much the same way that an electrical circuit is broken by a surge. When this occurs, the internal control mechanisms of our body break down, interfering with the communication between mind and body. This creates confusion or disharmony within your body.

Disease is not an entity, even though it is often classified in that way. In this way disease can be compared to darkness – it is a lack of something, in this case a lack of health.

### This is the true cause of lacking health:

We live in a time where we are bombarded by many stresses, far more than our forefathers and mothers as little as 100 years ago. These stresses come in one of three forms:

#### 1. Mental/Emotional

- Negative thoughts and images, feelings, environmental influences, deadlines, loss, technology.

#### 2. Chemical

- Nutritional deficiencies, processed/fast foods, pollution, drugs and habits.

#### 3. Physical

- Child birth, slips and falls, accidents and injuries, poor seating, sedentary lifestyles, gravity.

**So where to from here?** Increase the resistance to the stresses of life, after all they will always be with us and may not be able to be avoided. Change your habits, improve your diet, become more active, be positive in life and have a healthy nerve system to coordinate your new and improved healthy body to reach new levels of wellbeing.

## Make Stress Your Friend!

**Stress is the stimulus of life. How we process and manage it determines if it becomes a good thing or a bad thing.**

**So are you going to focus on being "positive" or "negative" today?**

From "Making stress a good thing". American Chiropractor. August 2005 P.54

