

### **How Chiropractic Supports Breastfeeding**

We all know the benefits of breastfeeding for a newborn, but we also must not underestimate the joy and emotional well-being that follow when a mother is able to feed her infant as planned and find empowerment through her own natural ability. Yet far too many women suffer from unexplained pain, latch problems and even infection when they attempt to breastfeed, one of the most natural things in the world. This overwhelming pain and trouble when a woman is at her most sensitive can cause the early cessation of the nursing relationship and considerable emotional turmoil. This not only results in disappointment for the mom, but also an infant who misses out on the very best in early nutrition.

## Nurture the Nervous System, Nourish the Baby

Written by Sarah Clark

Monday, 01 June 2015 00:00 - Last Updated Friday, 15 September 2017 08:17

---



[Appearing in Issue #46. Order A Copy Today](#)  
© Jenni King / Birthandlabortcoach.com

While education regarding breastfeeding is widely available, and hospitals and doctors often try to support this effort, we see many breastfeeding relationships end before the six-month mark. The Centers for Disease Control reports that 77 percent of infants are breastfeeding right after birth, but by six months of age only 49 percent continue. There are many things that can be done to increase breastfeeding rates, and chiropractic is one of them.

## Nurture the Nervous System, Nourish the Baby

Written by Sarah Clark

Monday, 01 June 2015 00:00 - Last Updated Friday, 15 September 2017 08:17

---

Inability to latch, refusal to nurse on one side, pain, and fussiness on the part of the baby are often the beginning of the end when it comes to breastfeeding. The answer to these problems is generally ignored by medicine. Yet, chiropractic adjustment of the infant and mother has been found to be an effective, painless, relatively inexpensive, quick, and safe solution to many common breastfeeding problems. Not only does a proper adjustment of the newborn by a well-trained, ICPA-certified chiropractor often alleviate these problems, but relief is frequently found after just one visit.

### Breastfeeding Success

We must begin to listen to mothers who have found success because of chiropractic. Theyryssa Gossman, a mother of two and a Birth Boot Camp childbirth educator in Memphis, had this to say about chiropractic:

*My newborn daughter wouldn't nurse on the right side and I developed mastitis before I knew what the problem was. I took her to get adjusted and they told me she was out of alignment and it was causing her discomfort to lie on her left side. Our chiropractor adjusted her and she started nursing like a champ... for 32 months!*

Just one adjustment enabled her child to empty the breast properly so that she could get adequate nutrition for her growth and development.

Suzanne Brown reports very typical nursing problems in her story:

*My daughter wouldn't nurse at all after she was born. She would latch, suck maybe three or four times, and then stop, and wouldn't try again for several hours. A chiropractor came to our house when she was about 24 hours old to adjust her, and she immediately began nursing normally. She is still happily nursing at 22 months old!*

While Suzanne's issues (ineffective and brief sucking that won't empty the breast or fill the newborn) are sadly very common, her answer in chiropractic is one that far too many women never find. Instead, "bad latch" and "insufficient supply" are given as common scapegoats without looking deeper at the cause of the problem.

## Nurture the Nervous System, Nourish the Baby

Written by Sarah Clark

Monday, 01 June 2015 00:00 - Last Updated Friday, 15 September 2017 08:17

---

Taylor Barnes, another nursing mother and childbirth educator, reported similar miraculous results:

*My newborn was not able to nurse on the left side. After a suggestion from my midwife, I took him to a chiropractor. He was able to nurse normally on both sides immediately afterward in the chiropractor's office!*

Many mothers have found that chiropractic adjustment of their newborns not only improved their nursing relationship, but made it possible at all. Chiropractic is a powerful tool in achieving a happy and healthy breastfeeding relationship.

### When New Issues Arise

The above success stories are from first-time moms, but employment of chiropractic doesn't just help those new to the challenges of breastfeeding. Allison Record, a mother of five (and one of the rare and incredible women who has achieved a vaginal birth after three cesarean sections) reported that chiropractic was instrumental in helping her breastfeed her fifth child.

*Our amazing chiropractor, Dr. Kristen, made a house call within an hour of my little one's birth last spring. After an adjustment, my baby girl was so much more relaxed and better able to learn to nurse.*

Thankfully, that first adjustment just after birth helped this mom-and-baby team get a good start.

However, one adjustment isn't always enough. Allison noticed more issues popping up later:

*I took her to my chiropractor, who found that her jaw was off, among other things, including tight frenula (the connective tissue under the tongue and where the lips attach to the gums). A visit with the best lactation consultant in our area confirmed that my baby had a lip tie and posterior tongue tie that were causing our difficulties. She recommended continuing to see our*

## Nurture the Nervous System, Nourish the Baby

Written by Sarah Clark

Monday, 01 June 2015 00:00 - Last Updated Friday, 15 September 2017 08:17

---

*chiropractor every week or two while we waited to get in with the doctor who does a procedure to release the tongue and lip tie with a laser.*

In this case, Allison found that additional interventions might be necessary in order to save the breastfeeding relationship, but chiropractic was still an invaluable asset and useful in putting off the surgery until it was available.

*It was my chiropractor that helped me decide to go ahead with the appointment for the “frenectomy,” and it was the right choice. Chiropractic really helped make our breastfeeding relationship successful, both before and after the procedure. I’m so glad I don’t have to find out what our experience might have been without competent chiropractic care for my little one as we tried to navigate her tongue- and lip-tie issues during those first seven weeks. In the following six weeks, my exclusively breastfed baby girl gained more than 3 pounds and learned to nap. You should see her cute, chunky legs!*

Even when chiropractic isn’t enough, it should be accessed before other, more extreme measures. Chiropractic care can help assist the family in meeting their breastfeeding goals even if it must be combined with other professional help. A trusted chiropractor who truly supports breastfeeding can give invaluable guidance during these important early days.

### Why Chiropractic Helps

Why is it that chiropractic works so well in removing common breastfeeding stumbling blocks? Nicole Piazza Lederman, an ICPA-certified chiropractor practicing in Waterloo, Ontario, and former associate professor at Parker University’s College of Chiropractic, explains it this way:

*Chiropractic helps for several reasons. First, in the newborn or preemie, the baby may have a weak suck reflex due to interference in the nervous system, especially at the level of the upper cervical spine. This can be caused by immaturity in the nervous system, in the case of the preemie, or by subluxation of the joints in the upper cervical spine due to birth trauma. Even in “good” hospital births, the head and neck are usually “managed” as the baby exits the birth canal and when the shoulders are delivered. This often results in some pulling and stretching of the tissues and joints in the neck. This type of birth trauma can cause a sprain/strain injury to the joints of the neck in addition to a subluxation complex.*

## **Nurture the Nervous System, Nourish the Baby**

Written by Sarah Clark

Monday, 01 June 2015 00:00 - Last Updated Friday, 15 September 2017 08:17

---

*Breastfeeding problems can also be caused by different cranial faults or slight misalignments in the cranial bones. This can again be due to the management of the head as the baby exits the birth canal. This can also be caused by the position of the baby in utero as well as prolonged or protracted labors, especially where vacuum or forceps have been used. In my experience, these babies will go to the breast and feed for a minute or two, but are fussy and come off the breast as they cannot get a good latch.*

*Most often I find that these babies have misalignment in the temporal mandibular joint, a fault at the frontal parietal articulation, as well as having an inferior palate on the same side as the TMJ subluxation. Once correcting this complex, you can test the sucking reflex by placing a finger in the baby's mouth; you'll find that the sucking reflex is better coordinated and much stronger. Moms are so relieved and grateful to be able to breastfeed their babies.*

Mothers and chiropractors are not the only ones who recognize the powerful and positive role that chiropractic can have on the nursing relationship. International Board Certified Lactation Consultants (IBCLCs) are also beginning to take note. Mellanie Sheppard, an IBCLC in the Fort Worth, Texas, area, says this, echoing many of Dr. Lederman's thoughts.

*A long, difficult birth, a very fast birth, a vacuum- or forceps-assisted birth, or a cesarean birth may create tightness or tension in the neck, jaw or shoulders, which in turn can create some dysfunctional sucking patterns. A dysfunctional suck can cause breastfeeding to be inefficient for baby and can create pain for mom. Chiropractic care can relieve this tightness and tension and result in better breastfeeding with less pain.*

When a lesson on how to latch just isn't enough to make breastfeeding work, chiropractic care just makes sense in correcting the deeper physiological causes of nursing difficulty. Helping the body function properly through a chiropractic adjustment does so much more than alleviate back pain.

### **Optimizing Mom's Nerve System**

Betsy Taylor, a chiropractor in the Dallas/Ft. Worth area for the last 18 years explains beautifully that chiropractic doesn't just make it easier for the baby to comfortably nurse—it also makes the mother more capable by optimizing her nerve system and nursing effectively.

## **Nurture the Nervous System, Nourish the Baby**

Written by Sarah Clark

Monday, 01 June 2015 00:00 - Last Updated Friday, 15 September 2017 08:17

---

*Chiropractic affects the nerve system through the musculoskeletal system. By removing interference in the communication flow from breasts to brain, quality function is achieved. This may include supply, reversing clogged ducts, or even promote healing from mastitis.*

*Another big plus is mother's comfort. The spinal focus during pregnancy (for comfort and function) is usually the low back and pelvis. Postnatal, it is the mid-back portion of the spine, usually from posture and holding the baby while looking down for long periods.*

*Being mother to a newborn includes some stressful times. A healthy, high-functioning spine aids Mama in handling stress.*

While we tend to think of the infant and mother as totally separate entities, in truth they are intimately connected. Restoring the full function of the maternal nervous system helps not just the mother, but her child as well.

### **A Needed Solution**

How many women have we seen who stop breastfeeding for valid reasons? Of those who wish to breastfeed, many still run into stumbling blocks that make it difficult and sometimes even impossible. A relationship that can and should be joyful is made a trial.

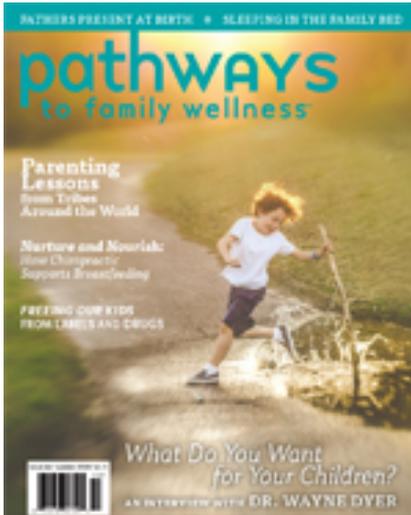
Lactation consultant Pamela K. Wiggins wrote, "Breastfeeding is a mother's gift to herself, her baby and the earth." Yet this immeasurable gift is often lost before it even gets off the ground. Chiropractic is powerful in making breastfeeding possible for so many people. We must not ignore this solution. With so many babies born via traumatic births and so many infants missing out on breastfeeding, we cannot underestimate the positive change that chiropractic is capable of making for women, their children and the world.

## Nurture the Nervous System, Nourish the Baby

Written by Sarah Clark

Monday, 01 June 2015 00:00 - Last Updated Friday, 15 September 2017 08:17

---



This article appeared in [Pathways to Family Wellness](#) magazine, Issue #46.  
To purchase this issue, [Order Here](#).