



## Chiropractic Newsletter

### Discover Chiropractic

## A Family Discovers Chiropractic: Keri and Sophie's Story

Keri had been a mom for six months and she didn't know what to do. Her daughter, Sophie, came into the world early, at 36 weeks, following a grueling pregnancy ending with 12 weeks of bed rest. Sophie was everything to her mother, but when she was just 4 weeks old, Keri noticed something. While Sophie was sitting in her car seat, her head looked like it was "on wrong," stuck in an awkward position that made her seem uncomfortable. After a brief evaluation from her pediatrician, Sophie was referred to a pediatric physical therapist, who diagnosed her with a severe case of torticollis.

Torticollis, sometimes referred to as "wry neck," is a painful condition wherein the muscles of the neck are in spasm, forcing the head into a tilted and rotated position.

The physical therapist warned Keri that Sophie would need rigorous therapy to stretch the tight muscles, but Sophie was still likely to be delayed in her development.

Despite an aggressive schedule of physical therapy sessions involving forceful stretching of Sophie's neck, as well as the work Keri tried to continue at home, the progress was limited. Keri noticed how Sophie started missing physical milestones, too. With delays in rolling over and lifting her head, Keri's worry turned to fear that the torticollis would prevent her daughter from crawling, walking, playing with friends, or participating in sports. Instead of seeing her perfect little girl, all Keri could see was the head tilt and changes in Sophie's appearance—asymmetry in her eyes and ears, and the flattening on the left side of her head caused by the inordinate amount of pressure from her laying on one side. Her fears of

needing to put her baby girl in a helmet to restore symmetry became reality.

Sophie completed a couple months of therapy, and was sporting a newly fitted helmet, but only saw mild improvements. Keri was getting nervous, and wanted to do more to find an answer. She and her husband had a common initial reaction when they first

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thought about chiropractic: "Nobody is touching our baby!" But a consultation with a local pediatric chiropractor offered some clarity as to why Sophie's improvement had been delayed. Torticollis, the chiropractor explained, is not exclusively a muscle problem, which is why stretching alone often does not fully resolve the condition. Rather, subtle misalignments in the upper bones of the neck can irritate the nervous system, disrupting the nerves that control the muscles in the neck, thereby causing them to spasm and restrict head position. By correcting this "subluxation," chiropractors allow the nervous system to coordinate bodily functions without interference. In Sophie's case, it could allow the muscles in her neck to relax and return to normal.

Keri and her husband were still unsure about chiropractic, but wanted to find an answer for Sophie, so they agreed to start. They watched the chiropractor feel Sophie's neck, delicately moving her head to feel for asymmetry and restrictions.

After holding a gentle pressure just behind her ear, the chiropractor smiled at them and confirmed the adjustment was made. "That's it?" Sophie's dad asked, surprised. It didn't seem like much, but the changes that soon came certainly were a big deal. After her second adjustment, Sophie started rolling over and reaching for her toes. In just a handful of

visits, considerable improvement was already obvious— Sophie had more mobility and better strength in her head and neck, improved symmetry in her head shape, and she was back on track with her developmental milestones!

Seeing how her daughter responded to chiropractic, Keri decided to give it a try for herself. She had never recovered from the back pain of pregnancy, the three months of bed rest before birth, or the neck pain from breastfeeding. “I was a mess!” she recalls. Within the first two weeks of receiving adjustments, Keri was feeling better—she was less tense, and sleeping better. Chiropractic had given her the physical ability to handle motherhood, and the emotional peace regarding Sophie’s health to really enjoy it.

It’s easy, though, to forget about taking care of our bodies when there’s not an obvious problem reminding us to do so. Gradually, the frequency of Keri and Sophie’s chiropractic visits waned. Before Keri knew it, it had been months since the last time she and Sophie were adjusted, and their prior movement patterns and muscle memories started returning, diminishing their quality of life. Sophie, now a toddler, was getting sick constantly, with colds that lasted longer and got worse with each subsequent infection. The once amazing sleeper was now struggling to get through the night, leading Keri to both lose sleep and feel the return of her neck and back pain.

When Keri discovered she was pregnant with her second baby, she knew it was time for a change. She recognized how much she and Sophie had regressed since discontinuing their regular care. Hoping to avoid the agony she experienced in her first pregnancy, and get Sophie back to her normal self, Keri returned to chiropractic.

They picked up right where they left off. With just a few weeks of adjustments, Sophie’s immune system grew stronger and more capable. While ear infections

and respiratory infections once overwhelmed her little body, now she just had sniffles. The antibiotics she learned to expect were relegated to distant memory.

Pregnancy was different for Keri, too. With the help of regular chiropractic, she was able to enjoy being pregnant. She slept well, stayed comfortable, and was able to chase her very active toddler until she gave birth at 38 weeks— full term! A natural progression and just four pushes were all she needed to bring her second daughter, Emmy, into her arms. “It was a perfect experience—night and day,” says Keri. “I know my pelvis being perfectly aligned allowed Emmy to be in the best position, and her head to engage and neck stay in alignment.”

After all they had been through with Sophie—the worry of her first few months, the delays in her development, the progress with chiropractic and the regression without it— it was obvious Emmy would be checked by their chiropractor right away. Emmy had a better latch and appeared more comfortable after her first adjustment, but for Keri the real value was in knowing her baby daughter would be well adjusted, and healthier, from the start.

Looking back on their journey and initial skepticism of chiropractic, Keri has a message for other parents: “It can be scary to think of other forms of healthcare besides medicine, but I can honestly say if I hadn’t found chiropractic, my daughter would still be suffering from the residual effects of her torticollis, and I wouldn’t be in the physical shape to have enjoyed my second pregnancy. Take control of your family’s health and consider other approaches, too. Once you try chiropractic, you’ll wonder what took you so long!”

—Ian Shtulman, DC, DACCP

*Appearing in Pathways to Family Wellness*

*Magazine Issue #62*

