

TMJ/Body Alignment Program

Dr. Swidler's pioneering work in the emerging field of Whole Body Dentistry has combined dentistry with Cranial Osteopathy. While most dentists' primary focus is on replacing broken teeth, bringing health to the gums and creating beautiful smiles, part of the approach at Medicine Wheel Dental is based on a totally new paradigm of understanding. Dentistry, and specifically the position of the jaw and bite, are absolutely foundational to stabilizing both body alignment, function, and helping create the opportunity for high level wellness. Many new approaches & treatment modalities were developed and anatomical relationships discovered by Dr. Swidler during his over thirty years of clinical research and development working actively with TMJ / bite dysfunction.

Body/Jaw Alignment BEFORE Restoring the Teeth or Orthodontics

Dr. Swidler's post-graduate education in Cranial Osteopathy addresses restrictions of motion, freeing the innate healing energies of the body & supporting the Autonomic Nervous System. Within the Central Nervous System, the cerebrospinal fluid is the "liquid light" of the body. There is gentle rhythmic motion of the bones and tissues of the skull and body with the ebb and flow of this cerebrospinal fluid. This fluid contains the highest healing potential for the body. Restrictions in the connective tissue/fascia from birth trauma, accidents, falls or other injuries create strain patterns in the "body glove" of connective tissue. In injuries and strain patterns where the connective tissue is restricted or twisted, there becomes less blood flow, lymphatic drainage and impairment of nerve signals. This lack of normal fluids and nerve signaling can result in the "withered fields" described by Dr. William Sutherland, founder of Cranial Osteopathy.

The "Body Glove" and fascial strain patterns – layers of the onion

To understand the connective tissue system of the body (Fascia), imagine your body form without skin, skeleton, organs and muscles, etc. What you are left with is a "body glove," shaped like your body and honey-combed with layers in patterns to support those organs, vessels and glands attaching them to the skeletal system. When a trauma (physical, mental, emotional) has occurred, a distortion in the body glove is created. This can create poor alignment, limited range of motion, uneven loading and pain.

Each successive trauma or injury impacts the body like layers of an onion; potentiating the negative effects of limited range of motion, impaired body function, pain and eventual degeneration. Postural realignment can often provide relief of pain in the head, neck, back, arms and legs. Restrictions can lead to reduced adaptability and tolerance to the stresses of life; both physical & emotional.

High level wellness comes from balanced body alignment along with equal and opposing motion of the cranial bones and the tissues of the body. This "body glove," without distortion and strain patterns, allows for maximum function and health.

What is Cranio Sacral Treatment (CST)?

Cranio Sacral is an Osteopathic model based on the work and research of Dr. William Sutherland in the early 1900's. Before his research it was believed that the cranium was a solid immovable mass. Dr. Sutherland discovered that the skull is actually made up of 29 separate and movable bones that are connected by layers of connective tissue. CST is a highly refined and subtle type of body work that encourages the release of stresses, tensions & strain patterns throughout the body, including the 29 bones of the head. It is a gentle yet extremely effective approach and may be used in a wide range of conditions for people of all ages, from birth to old age. "As the twig is bent, so grows the tree", so early correction is best.

How Does Dentistry Impact Body Alignment & Function?

What Are The Triplets™ and How Do They Affect Body Function & Alignment:

As above so below

Chiropractic and Osteopathic wisdom is already familiar with the Twin or "Lovitt Brother" relationship between the occiput of the skull and sacrum of the lower spine, and the first cervical vertebrae to 5th lumbar vertebrae, etc. through the entire spinal relationship. What Dr. Swidler discovered is the "triplet" relationship: if the jaw position is misaligned, then the cranial base (which internally is 1 to 1 ¼ inches from the cranial base and develops in the same embryonic plane), is also misaligned.

If the jaw position is a primary issue, it "throws off" the base of the skull (cranial base) and as every chiropractor and osteopath knows, this destabilizes the hips. If the hips are out of alignment it can result in sciatic pain, hip and sacral pain & knee pain. All the structures above the "uneven hips" will seek to compensate, causing distortions and restrictions. This results in poor blood & lymphatic flow, nerve function and muscular imbalance in restricted areas.

How we apply cranio sacral treatment & body alignment to dentistry

We begin with creating dental appliances, if indicated, to create a more ideal position for the jaw joint (temporal mandibular joint or TMJ). As soon as this position is established, the body begins to respond by relaxing and releasing injury patterns, various habitual strain patterns, and compensations. As this occurs, the bite changes subtly. The appliance is continually readjusted for each body change as layers of the strain pattern "onion" fall away. Medicine Wheel Dental's unique integrative team approach is designed to move you quickly through this process. At the end of one month, we review your initial complaints and symptoms. If at least half of these are being affected at one month, then the typical plan of care yields an average of 80% reduction of symptoms at the end of five months.

What is a Normal Jaw Position?

The jaw is operated by 7 major groups of muscles. The majority effect of these muscles when under contraction is to move the jaw closed, back and up. The jaw joint is normally in a "socket"

forward of the ear canal, and ideally functions on a thick boney articular surface at the front of that joint. For the majority of the population under constant stresses (food, environment, structural & emotional challenges), this jaw joint position can become compromised. The jaw joint gets driven back into the ear canal causing a myriad of symptoms, most notably aggravated by grinding, clenching, and holding the teeth together.

The only time the teeth should touch is when we are chewing or swallowing. All other times, “lips together, jaws relaxed.”

What happens if my Jaw Position is off?

TMJ problems have been called the “great masquerader,” because of all of the varied and seemingly unrelated symptoms it can create in the body. These can include any, all or none of the following: headaches, neck pain, back aches, pinched nerve symptoms, poor digestion, knee & hip pain, limited range of motion, shoulder issues, visual and hearing problems, decreased libido, infertility, low energy & fatigue. Think of the jaw as the handle of a puppet with strings. If the handle is askew, then the rest of the body is askew.

Could This Help Me? – A 2 minute self exam

1. Stand in front of a full length mirror. Put your pinky fingers deep into ear canals, thumbs down. Open and close your jaw wide, while observing. Does your jaw deviate to one side or another? Do you feel pressure against your fingertips in your ear? Do you hear clicking, popping or grinding noises?
2. Place your hands palms flat and parallel to the floor on your side hip bones in front of a full length mirror. Is one hip higher than the other?
3. Now, put your pinky fingers back in your ears. Open and close your jaw wide now touching only your front teeth edges. This will move jaw forward out of the ear canal. What do you feel against your fingertips? Has it changed? Usually, the clicking or popping will go away and result in less pressure on the pinky fingertips.
4. With front teeth end to end and touching, go up and down on toes a couple of times. Recheck the level of your hips. Have they leveled?
5. Ascending/Descending factors:
 - If the hips have leveled, you have just identified a descending issue of the body alignment originating with the jaw and bite position.
 - If hips have NOT leveled, there may be an ascending issue from the ankles, knees, or hips that is primary to your structural imbalance (not originating from the jaw).
 - Both of these issues, descending and ascending, can affect the body’s overall function and health.

Our Approach

Each patient has a unique history and set of circumstances that brought them to this point. This is an ideal time to create a truly supportive care network that will help in full realignment – physical,

mental, emotional & spiritual. Each patient's plan of care is adapted to your unique needs and circumstances; including working with your current practitioners and/or ours. These can include dental, osteopathy, massage, Dr. Swidler's patented percussion table, individualized yoga therapy; all of which are designed to "unwind" through the layers of the onion on "fast forward." Resetting the body's mechanisms cannot only decrease your current symptoms, but create a much broader range of tolerance and adaptability to life's stresses.

During the five-month treatment program, you can expect to be seen two times per week, for the first 6-8 weeks. As stability occurs, your visits may decrease to once a week, or once every two weeks. Our constant supervision is necessary because if the bite is not kept in alignment with the changes the body is making, symptoms can "return with a vengeance." It is best to correct the bite on your appliance as soon as changes occur. Your High Level Wellness is our main Goal.