



CELEBRATE THE HEALING POWER OF A GENTLE TOUCH:
DISCOVER CRANIOSACRAL THERAPY

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The keys to good health are proper nutrition, exercise, a stress reduced lifestyle and steering clear of harmful habits. But what about the aspect of health that originates from the inside, within our internal self-healing system? We know that the body is designed to defend us from disease and assist in healing, as evidenced every time we "fight off" a cold or a cut heals. What we may not be aware of are the innovative hands-on techniques available to facilitate that process.

One of the methods that work with the body in this capacity is CranioSacral Therapy. A light-touch manual approach, CranioSacral Therapy (CST) enhances the body's natural healing capabilities. For nearly 30 years it has been shown to be effective for a wide range of medical problems associated with pain and loss of function. CST is useful as both a primary treatment method and combined with other traditional or complementary techniques.

HOW CST WORKS

The CST practitioner works with the client to assist the body's self-correcting mechanisms. Generally using about five grams of pressure, or about the weight of a nickel, the practitioner evaluates the body's craniosacral system. This system plays the vital role of maintaining the environment in which the central nervous system functions. It consists of the membranes and fluid that surround and protect the brain and spinal cord as well as the attached bones—including the skull, face and mouth, which make up the cranium, and the tailbone area, or sacrum. Since the brain and spinal cord are contained within the central nervous system, it is easy to see that the craniosacral system has a powerful influence over a wide variety of bodily functions.

The CST practitioner essentially helps the body release restrictions—which it has been unable to overcome on its own—that inhibit the body's normal, self-correcting tendencies. Rather than deciding how these changes should be made, the therapist follows cues from the body on how to proceed. When the therapist follows this gentle approach, the method is extremely safe and effective. The few contraindications to CST are aneurysm, intracranial hemorrhage, and other conditions where altering intracranial fluid is not recommended.

BENEFITS OF CRANIOSACRAL THERAPY

CST has been shown to alleviate a wide range of conditions including infantile disorders such as colic and early feeding problems, autism, learning disabilities, seizures, motor problems, failure-to-thrive and many others. Other conditions such as traumatic brain and spinal cord injuries, migraine headaches, chronic fatigue and fibromyalgia, motor-coordination impairments, chronic neck and back pain, scoliosis, central nervous system disorders, emotional difficulties, temporomandibular joint dysfunction (TMJ), stress and tension-related problems, post-traumatic stress disorders and orthopedic problems.

While the focus of CST is to uncover the source of the problem, symptom relief also is achieved. The length of time and number of sessions needed is extremely variable and depends on the complex layers of injury and trauma that may mask the original cause of the problem as well as the body's defense mechanisms.

Due to its gentleness and effectiveness, many people include CST as a component in their personal wellness programs. They report having more energy, sleeping better and being sick less often.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF CRANIOSACRAL THERAPY

The original concepts for what is now known as the craniosacral system were put forth by osteopathic physician William Sutherland in the early part of this century. Dr. Sutherland's studies culminated in a system of treatment known as Cranial Osteopathy.

Another osteopath, John Upledger, is credited with developing CranioSacral Therapy. While assisting during a surgery in 1970, Dr. Upledger observed a rhythmic movement of the dura mater, the membrane that encompasses the brain and spinal cord. Neither his colleagues nor medical texts could explain his observation. Dr. Upledger's curiosity led him to the work of Dr. Sutherland, and later to develop his own scientific studies to confirm the existence of the craniosacral system. This work went on from 1975 to 1983, while he served as a clinical researcher and Professor of Biomechanics at Michigan State University. The findings of the research team he supervised first established the scientific basis for the craniosacral system.

Dr. Upledger's continued work resulted in his development of CranioSacral Therapy. He formed the Upledger Institute in 1985 to educate the public and healthcare practitioners about the benefits of CST. To date, the Institute has trained more than 40,000 healthcare practitioners worldwide in the use of CST. Practitioners Certified by the Institute can be located on the web site: www.upledger.com.