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# Shoulder, Arm & Hand Problems

# Shoulder, Arm & Hand Problems



Chiropractic's success with shoulder, arm and hand problems is well documented.

- **Many Names For Shoulder Problems**

Neuritis, bursitis, neuralgia, rheumatism, frozen shoulder, fibrositis, sprains, strains, "poor circulation" and rotator cuff problems are some of the terms used to describe neck, shoulder and arm conditions.

- **Brain Control**

What controls your shoulders, arms and hands? Your brain! Your brain "talks" with the rest of your body through a vast communications system made up of nerves called the nervous system. Billions of nerves extend from your brain as a large bundle called the spinal cord, travel down your back inside your spinal column and exit between your spinal bones to go to nearly every part of your body.

- **Plexus**

Some nerves go straight to their point of destination but some first mix with other nerves to form complicated nerve networks called a nerve "plexus."

- **Brachial Plexus**

The brachial plexus is made up of nerves that come out of the middle and lower neck and upper back. After they form the brachial plexus they branch off to supply different areas, especially the shoulders, arms, elbows, wrists, hands and fingers.

- **Brachial Plexus Injury**

People sometimes blame their joint or organ problems on "old age" even though they have many other joints and organs that are just as old that have no problems. Irritation to the nerves



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Old injuries, even birth stress, can cause spinal nerve damage that can affect the arms, shoulders and hands.



would be a more accurate analysis.

The nerves that make up the brachial plexus may be irritated as they exit the spinal column. This may occur

when the spinal bones in the neck and upper back are misaligned and damage the very nerves they are supposed to protect.

What causes the spinal bones to misalign? Nearly any injury or “trauma” could do it. Old injuries such as childhood falls, sports mishaps, car accidents (especially whiplash—a situation where the head and neck are suddenly “snapped” forward and backward) and sleeping in an awkward position could damage the spine. Even birth stress could cause spinal nerve damage that can affect the arms, shoulders and hands.

### • Results Of Brachial Plexus Injury

Depending on which brachial plexus nerves are damaged, different symptoms may be experienced. There may be muscle weakness; there may be neck pain or stiffness with or without pain that spreads or “radiates” to the shoulder, arm, wrist, hand or fingers. Sometimes there is no neck pain but pain in the arm, wrist, fingers or hand. Sometimes there’s numbness, sometimes there’s pain and numbness and sometimes there are strange nerve sensations (“pins and needles”).<sup>1-2</sup>

### • Other Conditions

Because of the complicated way nerves interrelate, headache; migraine; facial pain; dizziness; limited,

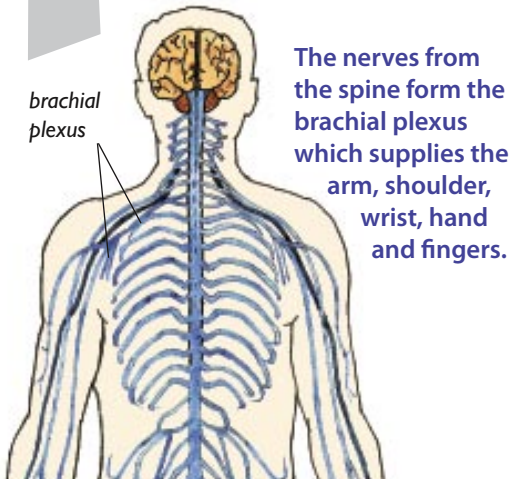


Spinal nerve damage in the neck could affect nerves going to the shoulders, arms and hands.

painful or stiff motion of the head and neck; throat conditions; thyroid and nasal problems; epilepsy and even lower back pain have been reported as a result of neck or brachial nerve plexus irritation.<sup>3</sup>

### • Carpal Tunnel Syndrome

Carpal Tunnel Syndrome or CTS is now so common it’s called an “occupational disease.”<sup>4</sup> Symptoms include tingling and numbness in the hand, fingers and wrist; pain so intense that it awakens



you at night and similar symptoms in the upper arm, elbow, shoulder or neck. “Faulty enervation caused by spinal joint lesions is one of the main factors in the production of wrist swelling, carpal tunnel syndrome, [and] tennis elbow.”<sup>5</sup> Increasing numbers of CTS sufferers are seeking out the non-drug, non-surgical approach that chiropractic offers.

### • The Chiropractic Approach

Although chiropractic’s success with shoulder, arm, wrist and hand problems is well documented,<sup>6-12</sup> chiropractic is really not a “treatment” for those problems.

The chiropractic approach to shoulder and hand problems, carpal tunnel syndrome, brachial plexus injury or to any health problem is to analyze your structural system to locate and correct a serious nerve-damaging structural condition called the subluxation.

### • The Subluxation

A subluxation is a misalignment of your body structure that puts stress on your nerves, bones,

ligaments, discs, tendons, muscles, tissues and internal organs. Your nervous system coordinates and organizes your entire body and its proper functioning is essential for physical and neurological health. If there is any damage to it, the effects can be profound.

Your doctor of chiropractic is specially trained to locate and correct subluxations. Unless corrected, subluxations in your body can cause or contribute to many health conditions and prevent or interfere with the normal healing process.

After your chiropractor has located your subluxations he or she will “adjust” or correct them. This will release structural and nerve pressure and help restore the healthy flow of nerve impulses between your brain and your body parts and help rebalance your system.

### • Prevention

Many of the problems caused by an unhealthy structural system can be corrected and more serious problems prevented by having your and your family’s bodies checked on a periodic basis.

An ancient Chinese health saying is: “If people paid attention to their little health problems, they wouldn’t have big health problems.”

Just as the strings must be properly tuned so your nerves must keep your body in proper tune.

