



The Child's Book of Alternatives

by Jacqueline Stenson

By the time Kristin Wilinkiewicz was 5, her ear infections were no longer just an occasional problem—they were a recurring nightmare. “She’d be free from medication for two to three weeks and then back on it,” says her mother, Phyllis. “And this went on for a year.: For Kristin, the taste of some of the antibiotic liquids she had to swallow was almost worse than the pain; one made her throw up. And the fluid buildup in her ears interfered with her hearing. On their pediatrician’s recommendation, Phyllis scheduled surgery to have Kristin’s adenoids removed and drainage tubes placed in her ears, a prospect that terrified the young girl.

Around that time, Phyllis learned that the chiropractor she saw for her back pain, Michael LeRoux, also treated kids with ear infections. So Phyllis brought Kristin in. After undergoing manipulation of her neck and spine a few times each week for three months, Kristin began having fewer infections.

Phyllis cancelled the surgery. “The operation wasn’t a guarantee of success,” Phyllis says, “and this was a lot less painful.” It seemed to work, too. Kristin had suffered about seven infections in the year before she started getting chiropractic adjustments; she had only two in the year after.

It isn’t clear how—or even if—manipulation helps prevent these infections. LeRoux, of Ocean State Chiropractic in Providence, Rhode Island, thinks the treatment may ease muscle tension and alleviate pressure on pinched nerves, promoting drainage, but there are no studies to prove manipulation actually works. Still, it’s an increasingly popular alternative to surgery for children suffering from chronic ear infections. LeRoux says adjustments seem to work wonders for about 60 to 70 percent of his young patients.

To read the article in it’s entirety, please reference the April 2004 issue of Health Magazine.