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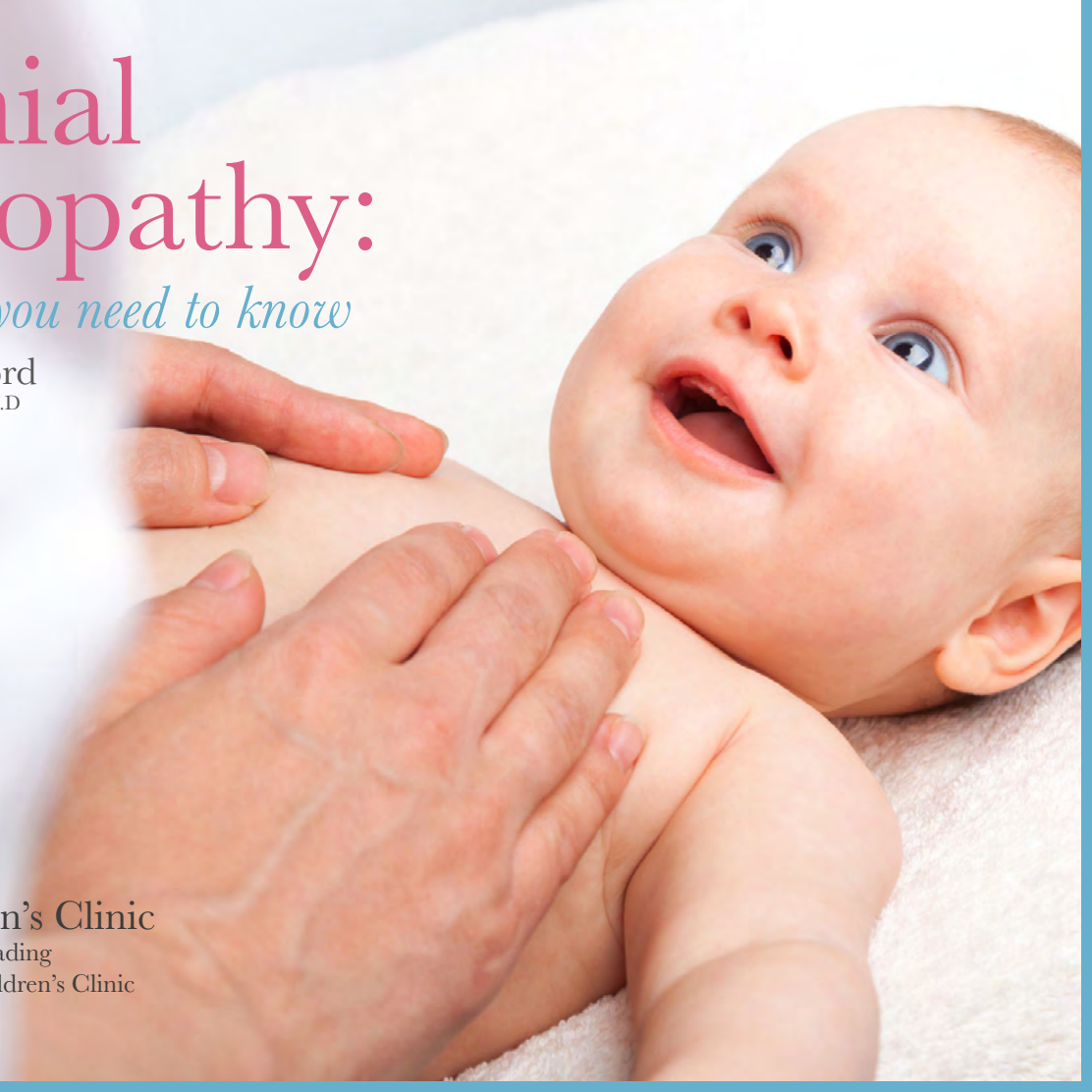
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Cranial Osteopathy:

Everything you need to know

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Soothe Children's Clinic
Central Manchester's leading
Cranial Osteopathy Children's Clinic





What is Cranial Osteopathy?

Cranial Osteopaths are highly trained to detect areas of tension in the body, whether as a result of birth or an impact such as a fall, a hit with a ball or even teething.

Using gentle touch, Cranial Osteopaths attempt to remove this tension and relieve areas of pressure through the body. This simply enables the body to function as it should, unimpeded by tension or pressure.

That's all. Nothing to be afraid of.



Case Studies

To explain Cranial Osteopathy to you I'm going to start with some case studies: These are my personal patients, so all names have been changed.

RACHEL - HEADACHES

Rachel, 23yrs old presented with life-long temporal headaches, from childhood to adulthood, that evolved into migraines in her 20's. Tired of migraine medication and a life dictated by headaches, she decided to try cranial osteopathy.

Her symptoms resolved within 2 cranial osteopathic.

Her case history revealed she was born by forceps delivery.

JAMES - HEAD PAIN

James, a 34yr old builder presented with unexplained stabbing head pains. All his head scans were clear and his doctors were unable to give him a diagnosis.

His head pain disappeared after 2 cranial osteopathic treatments, and never returned.

His case history revealed a recent dental bridge and crown.

MOLLY - NOT SLEEPING

Molly presented aged 4 weeks, sleeping only 2 hours per night.

After her first cranial treatment she slept the whole day and within 2 treatments she was sleeping 5 hours in a stretch at night. Her mother was worried that she was sleeping too much!

Molly's case history revealed she was born by forceps delivery.

In all the above situations, the patients experienced situations that caused areas of tension to be held by their body. (dental work, head impact from a fall, forceps delivery). Often this resolves itself naturally through movement, but often it doesn't, and can remain for your whole life.

This is where Cranial Osteopathy comes in.

Cranial Osteopathy is all about removing tension from the body.

The reason that Cranial Osteopathy was effective in these cases is simply anatomy.

Any area of tension or compression in the body can affect the body's ability to function as it should, and tends to translate into some form of symptom, such as pain. Cranial osteopathy removes this tension / compression, allowing the body to relax and restore normal function.

The symptoms experienced by compression or tension in the body will depend on what structure is being affected.

TENSION = PAIN/OTHER SYMPTOM

How does it work?



When you visit a masseur/physio, they release tension from the muscles and joints on the outside of your body. You can see and feel what they are doing. It makes sense.

But there are several deeper layers of interconnective tissue: fascia, muscles, membranes, nerves, fluid etc. that make up the rest of your body.

Cranial osteopaths feel for movement and, more importantly, lack of movement in these deeper layers of the body. A lack of movement, or a distorted movement indicates an area of tension.

Cranial techniques are extremely gentle, and you most likely won't feel anything at all during a treatment.

By removing areas of tension, the natural functioning of the body is restored: flow of fluids in the body is restored (lymph, blood, Cerebro spinal fluid, interstitial fluid), neural firing is un-impeded, and muscles are not under strain.



EXAMPLE

Imagine you are in a car crash, and receive a whiplash. The body is wired to protect your brain at all times, and in a car crash the tissues in your neck instantly tighten up to protect your head and brain from injury. It's a beautiful, in-built reflex mechanism of the body. But after the crash the tissues remain tight, causing you neck pain. The brain doesn't know that it is safe to let go. You have massage after massage, treatment after treatment, but still the whiplash symptoms remain. Why? Because the deeper layers of tissue, closer to the spine and brain have tightened up, and normal structural treatment doesn't reach those layers. Cranial techniques do.

CASE STUDY - WHIPLASH

Sarah, 47, presented with a 20 year history of neck pain sustained following a 70mph car crash whiplash. She had had 20 years of treatment but still had unrelenting neck pain.

Her pain was 80% improved after 3 cranial osteopathic treatments.

This is a true story. She was my patient. We were both in shock at the speed of her recovery! In the right situation, cranial osteopathy can work very quickly.

It's all about the nervous system

Cranial osteopathy is built on the understanding and premise that pressure on any part of the nervous system causes symptoms.

If you cut your finger, you will feel pain. If a spinal disc bulges and hits a spinal nerve, you will feel pain down the nerve. If your neck muscles get tight, they can trap the brachial plexus nerves as they exit the neck, and cause tingling or pain in your hand. This is easy to understand.

Anything that places external pressure on the brain, spinal cord or nerves, can create symptoms elsewhere.

The same goes for internal, unseen sources or pressure, such as tension through the facial bones as a result of dental work or tension through the skull as a result of birth,

But what about the rest of the face? Why would that not be affected also? It's quite acceptable to consider the possibility that strong dental work can leave tension through the facial bones and jaw. What would pressure through these bones do? It could potentially cause pain in the head and jaw. It could also affect the ability of the sinuses to drain.

IN A NUT SHELL

Cranial osteopathy is fundamentally, an anatomy-based treatment form aiming to release tension from any part of the body to restore normal function.

More specifically: tension through the musculoskeletal system and it's impact on the underlying nervous system and fluid systems.

Cranial Osteopathy = Removal of tension from the body.

That's all.

It's also about the fluids

If you stand on a garden hose, you will stop the water flowing through it.

Tension anywhere in the body can restrict fluid flow. (Blood, tissue fluids, lymph etc.)

Have you ever come out of a strong dental treatment with neck pain? That's the muscles - tensing up to protect your neck during the treatment.



Cranial Osteopathy for Children

Babies have muscles and tissues that get tight, just like you do.

LABOUR

The human body is completely designed to withstand and actually thrive from the pressures of being born. The pressures exerted on the baby are extremely important to force fluid out of the lungs and kick start many of the natural functions of the body.

The skull is not one bone. It is 23 bones that have joints between them.

In a baby, the bones of the skull are still cartilage. They have not yet fused together. During birth, they slide over each other to allow the baby to exit the birth canal.

SO WHAT GOES WRONG? WHY DOES MY BABY NEED CRANIAL OSTEOPATHY?

Sometimes during the course of labour, the baby's skull can receive slightly more pressure influences on it, eg: forceps/ventouse/prolonged labour. This can leave residual tension between the little bones of the skull. Sometimes this resolves itself through the baby crying and suckling. But sometimes it doesn't.



BUT WHAT DOES THIS DO?

Consider the possibility that tension can be left through a baby's body as a result of birth.

We know that pressure on the spinal nerves causes pain, so let's consider that a perhaps residual tension through the skull could place a gentle pressure on the brain. This is one of the foundational understandings of cranial osteopathy. The resulting symptoms of this situation are completely sub-clinical (ie: not requiring medical attention) such as: excessive crying, colic, sleeping difficulties, difficulty latching on.



Examples of Symptoms Treated

EXCESSIVE CRYING

The rapid reduction in crying as a result of cranial osteopathic treatment has led us to believe that sometimes, the tension left from birth just causes a basic headache. Adults get tension headaches don't we? Why wouldn't a baby?

COLIC

Osteopaths observe that a long labour can leave some tension between the base of the skull and the top of the neck, placing pressure onto the vagus nerve as it passes out of the base of the skull to the neck. The vagus nerve supplies the digestive system. Pressure through the vagus nerve could therefore irritate the vagus nerve, affecting the baby's digestive system, resulting in colic. It's just anatomy.

SLEEPING DIFFICULTIES

Osteopaths observe a strong correlation between a forceps/ventous birth and poor sleep. It is postulated that the reason for this is that the gentle pressure left by a forceps or ventouse application affects the area of the brain that controls/moderates sleep, just behind the forehead.

CONSTIPATION

Sometimes babies are breach throughout their entire pregnancy period. Osteopaths observe a strong correlation between breach births and constipation. The understanding is that the baby is born with a little bit of tension through the lumbar spine, affecting the neural supply to the digestive system.

DIFFICULTY LATCHING ON

Sometimes babies are face-presentation at birth, rather than crown-presentation. Osteopaths observe that this can leave residual tension through the face and jaw, making it difficult for the baby to latch on.

GLUE EAR

Sometimes the pressure/tension left through the skull as a result of birth can affect the temporal bones and the structures around the ear and the eustachian tube. Tension anywhere can restrict fluid flow. ie. restriction of fluid drainage from the ear. Osteopaths observe that this restriction of fluid drainage can result in or contribute to glue ear and ear infections. It's just anatomy.



The Experience

WHAT HAPPENS IN A CONSULTATION/TREATMENT?

On your first visit to a cranial osteopath the osteopath will start by having a chat with mum/dad /carer and take a detailed medical history. They will ask you about your pregnancy, the birth, and the child's symptoms since birth.

Then they will assess the child, by placing their hands on different parts of the child's body. **The usual places they check are:**

1. The spine
2. The chest
3. The neck and head

Treatment will begin with out you even noticing! The osteopath will look like they are doing nothing at all. You might want to take a book to your appointments.

The osteopath is feeling for movement, or rather, lack of movement throughout the body. A lack of movement indicates an area of tension that needs releasing.

The Osteopath will use the gentlest of touch to release the tension they find in your child. Your child will feel very little. And certainly they will not experience any pain during treatment.

HOW MANY TREATMENTS WILL MY CHILD NEED?

In my personal experience, most symptom pictures require a minimum of 3 treatments, and most symptom pictures resolve within 6 treatments. You should not require more than 6 treatments unless you are treating a long term management condition such as autism.

THE REASONS YOU NEED MORE THAN ONE TREATMENT ARE THESE;

1. Osteopaths are treating '**strain patterns**' through the body. (eg: a forceps compression). Often, when you release an area of tension the child experiences a relief from symptoms for a few days and then it returns. This is because the strain pattern/tension drags the tissues back to the original strain pattern. It takes about 3 treatments for the living tissues of the body to relax and learn to hold a new position.

2. The body releases tension in '**layers**'. The most superficial tension releases first, allowing the osteopath to be able to feel the deeper levels of tension held in deeper tissues. So all levels of tension cannot be released in one treatment - it's just not possible.

IS CRANIAL OSTEOPATHY SAFE?

Yes. Cranial Osteopathy is 100% safe.

It is not possible to harm your child in any way whatsoever through Cranial Osteopathy.

The worst case scenario for you is that you will see no change. (although personally I have never seen a child show 'no change' after a course of treatment.)

So, in a nutshell...

1. Cranial osteopathy is 100% safe for your child. Seeing an Osteopath cannot hurt your child. That is the most important thing you need to know.
2. You must see a Paediatric Cranial Specialist if you want to get the best results.

If you have a baby or child and want to try cranial osteopathy, you need to see an Osteopath who specialises in Paediatric Cranial Osteopathy. Obviously someone who specialises in any area of medicine is going to be more profficient at their skill. The difference between seeing a new graduate with little experience and seeing a paediatric specialist with years of experience is huge.

You will get different results. So if you have seen a cranial osteopath and not got the great results you expected, don't lose hope! Keep looking for a more experienced, specialist osteopath.

They are out their in huge numbers - you just need to seek them out!



The Technicals

TRAINING

UK Osteopaths are degree trained to BSc. (HONS) standard. The degrees of many UK Osteopaths are given by The University of Westminster.

Osteopaths are given 'Structural' (working with the muscles and joints) and 'Cranial' technique training in their undergraduate degree, and are qualified to practice Cranial Osteopathy on graduation. Many then carry out post-graduate Cranial training. Many carry out Paediatric post-graduate training. It's different.

Some Osteopaths choose to specialise in Structural treatment, some specialise in Cranial treatment, and some use a mixture of both.

REGULATION

Osteopathy is a Government regulated profession. The Osteopathic regulating body, The General Osteopathic Council (GOsC) is regulated by the Government.

All osteopaths are accountable to the GOsC.

They can be struck off (like Doctors can from the GMC) and stopped from practicing.



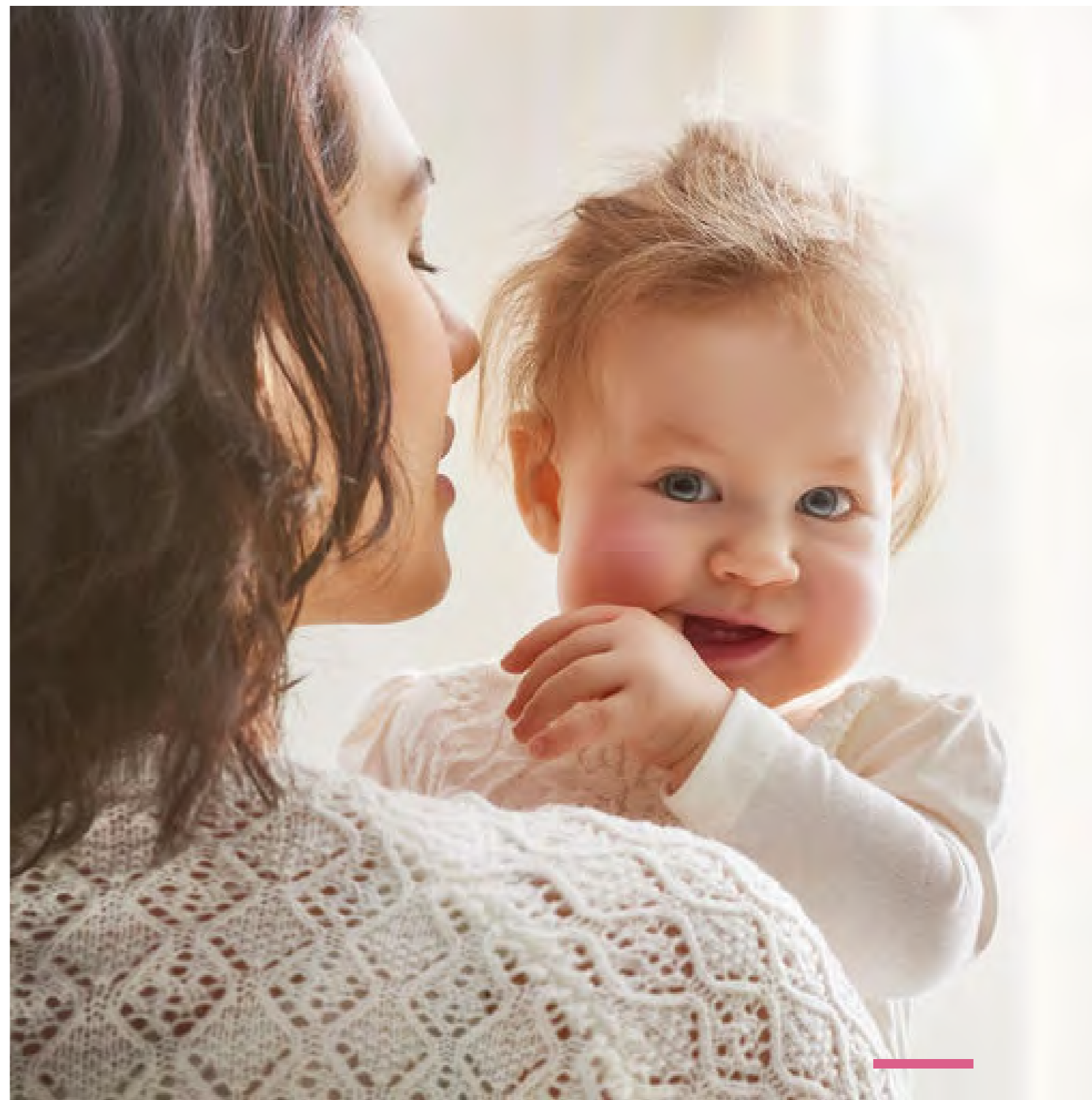
IS THERE ANY RESEARCH EVIDENCE ON CRANIAL OSTEOPATHY?

Yes. Lots. Here's a few links;

Radiographic evidence of cranial bone mobility.
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/11831342>

Recording the Rate of the Cranial Rhythmic Impulse
<http://jaoa.org/article.aspx?articleid=2093282>

A preliminary assessment of the impact of cranial osteopathy for the relief of infantile colic
<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1744388105001350>





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