

June '16 Wellness Letter

Dear Patients and Friends,

Here's a great question: "If you break a bone, how long does it take to heal"? Some people don't know the answer to this and others reply quickly "6-8 weeks". Even though the orthopedic surgeon puts a cast on a broken arm the pain doesn't go right away. It takes some time for the swelling to subside and the surrounding tissues to start to mend before it starts to feel better. Usually within a few weeks it feels better but the bone is still repairing itself.

It's been a common theme in our office this spring that people understand a broken bone healing but not soft tissue healing. So many have been sedentary all winter and the first nice day they spent 6 hours in the yard bent over or lifting heavy items in the garage to get their patio furniture out or uncover their pool. Others have started their golf league and only dusted off their clubs the morning of their first outing. Most are not warming up properly or stretching after they've done increased physical activities. If they do experience pain they are using heat first which further inflames their condition and could make it take longer to recover. Then when the adjusting table brings them back upright after we adjust them back into alignment they say "it still hurts"!

Please don't take the summary above personally. It simply points out that most people do not understand how soft tissue healing is accomplished. We live in a world of instant gratification. It hurts and I want to be pain-free! Don't we all fall into that category?

Soft tissue healing is a process. First you need to "put the fire out". Ice is the best natural pain-reliever. Cold laser also works to decrease pain and swelling as well as working at the cellular level to promote soft tissue healing using different frequencies of light. Next you need to restore motion to the involved area as soon as possible to limit scar tissue formation. This is why using a sling for an injured shoulder or prolonged bed rest for back pain is so bad for the patient. A chiropractic adjustment restores normal alignment and motion to the involved joints safely and effectively. Injured soft tissues will start to mend gradually just like a broken bone but it takes time. Usually a patient will feel better in the first 2-3 weeks and then do too much physical activity and then re-injure themselves which occurs most commonly in the following 2-3 weeks. Another great example of this is stopping an antibiotic when the sore throat is gone and then the sore throat comes back and you find yourself back taking another antibiotic. It is a repetitive negative cycle.

Once the pain and swelling subsides and motion starts to return it is crucial to engage and activate the muscles supporting the area to strengthen and stabilize them. Chronicity is linked to weak supporting structures and resulting poor posture. It is also important to maintain the mobility of the injured area until there is a return to normal movement patterns. Otherwise, frequent relapses are likely to occur.

Chiropractic care is ideally suited to help you achieve a healthy and active lifestyle in addition to helping you recover properly when injuries do occur. Understanding how the body heals will help you to be an active participant in the healing process and understand how to better facilitate this healing process.

We are always here to help!

Make it a great day!

Dr. Ed

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