

—Erickson Family—

Chiropractic

EFC News

Upcoming Events:

- **December 17:** Santa Claus is coming to EFC. He will be at our clinic from 11-3 this Saturday!
- **December 23** at two: Closed for Christmas
- **December 24-30:** Closed for

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Proper Body Mechanics for Performing Winter Chores Pain-Free

Most, if not all, of us do winter chores every single day. Even if you rent or own a condo, you probably still shovel snow and walk across slippery paths daily. How many of us are doing this with the correct biomechanics?

Low back pain is an extremely common condition, but it can often be easily prevented. Stomach muscles or “core muscles” must be strong, their strength is necessary to support your back while doing any physical work. These muscles are also very important for any day to day activities, especially ones that are more active in nature.

Proper biomechanics should always be done while lifting. It is very important to always do as much as possible to protect your back from injury. Proper bending should be from the knee’s, keeping the back as straight as possible. This means

that the knees should be bent as much as possible, and the back should remain loose and free. Also be careful to never twist while your back is extended, or while you are lifting a very heavy load. Slow and steady is the way to good lifting ability, long-term.

Be sure to rest often while moving a load, and always make sure that your hand grip on the shovel or snow blower is firm and steady. Hold the load as close to you as possible, keep your feet shoulder-width apart and your shoulders should be as relaxed as possible.

Snow shoveling is very hard on a person’s back, especially when done incorrectly. There should be no excessive bending, so use as long of a shovel as possible. Aim for 100% correct posture the entire time you are clearing snow, and please remember to



stand up straight with your shoulders back.

The most important part winter clean up while protecting your back is to move your feet. Do NOT lift a full load and then twist to dump it. Simply lift the load, with your back straight and your knees bent, and then walk it over to the snow pile. Finally, if dumping the snow any distance away, remember to keep your back straight, your shoulders back and your head up. Try not to over-fill the shovel as well. Smaller loads done more often are easier on

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Winter and Vitamin D

The sunshine vitamin, vitamin D, is called this because it forms naturally when your skin is exposed to sunlight. This Vitamin D precursor (cholecalciferol or D3) is made in the skin when exposed to energy from sunlight. A complex chemical process that utilizes enzymes in both the liver and the kidneys finally

produces the biologically active form of Vitamin D. This whole process is regulated by the stores of cholecalciferol in your body.

During the winter months these stores can become depleted because of the amount of time that we spend inside without exposure to the sun. When we do go outside very little of our

skin is exposed to the sunlight. Natural dietary sources of Vitamin D are also rare that is why many of our food sources are fortified with vitamin D. The easiest and cheapest way to get enough vitamin D is to allow yourself at least 15 minutes of exposure to the sun per day. Unfortunately in the winter this

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Winter Chores - Continued from Pg. 1



“Stomach muscles or “core muscles” must be strong, their strength is necessary to support your back while doing any physical work.”

I often get asked by patients if they should wear a back brace while doing chores. My thoughts on back braces are “that it depends.” Anything that is worn to stabilize the back will also weaken the muscles of the back, especially if it is used for long periods of time. Therefore, always use a brace with professional health care supervision and very careful thought. There are many cases when a back brace makes excellent sense, as it will protect the back from injury and help to provide support. This is especially true for people who have suffered from a back injury, or who for any other reason have insufficient musculing in their backs or abdomens. The brace should only be used if it is absolutely warranted, and then should only be used while actively doing work. This is especially true when bending or lifting for short periods of time.

Seeing a licensed Doctor of Chiropractic is always a great idea to avoid and/or to treat back pain, and most docs will tell you if a back brace would help to support your low back during chore activities. There

are numerous back strengthening and stretching exercises that your chiropractor can discuss with you, as well. Anything that will strengthen your core muscles (stomach muscles) will help to support your spine. This includes exercises to target your core muscles, and aerobic exercise to increase overall fitness. Proprioceptive training will greatly help to protect your low back from injury, as well.

Remember, snow can be a lot of fun. So get outside and enjoy the best parts of winter!

As the Christmas season continues on, please consider giving the gift of health to someone this year. We offer gift certificates in any amount, and these can be a great way to introduce someone to Chiropractic care!

Also, if you have any specific questions for us (or would like to know more about any one topic specifically), please feel free to call us at (262) 628-8535, e-mail us at ericksonchiro@yahoo.com or check out our website at

www.ericksonchiro.com.

Have a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

We hope to see you all in 2012!

Dr. Amber Erickson DC

Driving Safely in Winter Weather Conditions

Winter driving can be hazardous and stressful, even for the safest of drivers.

Driving is made more dangerous in cold and wet by the often slippery road conditions, from snow and ice accumulating on the road ways. This is often compounded by poor visibility from snow falling, or from snow accumulating on the windows of your car. If your car happens to be outside during a heavy snow fall, be

sure to completely remove all of the snow from every window and from the lights. Visibility is even more important in winter time.

A winter safety kit is a very important item to keep in your car, just in case you become stranded in winter weather. Dialing 511 from your cell phone in WI will give you an update on the local road conditions.

Remember to slow down if road conditions are not optimal. It can take longer to stop if there is ice or snow accumulated on the roads. Pay attention to the road, this means no texting or talking on your cell phone. If you need to take a call, either pull over to talk or re-schedule the call for a later time.

Cruise control can be extremely dangerous in winter

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Winter Driving, cont.

(Continued from page 2)
driving, and should never be used in slippery road conditions. Even the slight tap on the brakes to de-activate the cruise control could cause your car to lose traction and spin on a slippery road. If you need to pass a snow plow, do so with caution!

Remember that four wheel drive will not help you stop, and that having this feature can provide a false sense of security. There are no tricks for stopping faster on slippery roads, so slow down your speed and give yourself plenty of time to stop.

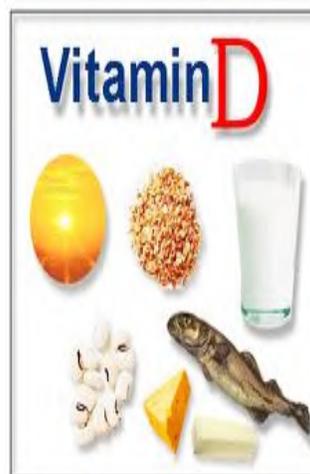
While driving anytime, regardless of the weather conditions, good lumbar back support is always important. Many of the newer models of car have built in lumbar support that is customizable. This can do a lot to minimize low back pain, especially after a long trip in the car.

It is imperative that the seat be adjusted to fit the driver, as well. It should be adjusted to the optimal height for you; the driver does not have to extend

his head to see the road, or does not have to look down to see out the windshield. This goes for steering wheel height, as well. I often hear patients talking about their hands going numb while driving for extended periods of time. This can often be slowed by lower the steering wheel to a more comfortable position. However, hands "tingling" can also be a sign that something is not working perfectly in your lower neck. Your doctor of chiropractic can help with that!

In the unfortunate case of a motor vehicle accident, it is very important to be checked out by a competent chiropractor. Whiplash injuries are very common, and often go undiagnosed or untreated. Injuries such as these can be very painful, but occasionally they do not cause any noticeable problems until much later. Therefore it is very important to have a full exam performed by a doctor of chiropractic to ensure an injury-free spine that has full range of motion.

Safe travel to everyone this holiday season!



"In future research it may be discovered that Vitamin D deficiencies play a role in many human disease processes."

Vitamin D, cont.

(Continued from page 1)
can not be done by standing in front of a window. Tanning beds can also help to accomplish the formation of Vitamin D, however the warnings about skin cancer must be heeded.

Vitamin D is a hormone that serves many functions within the body. As many know, vitamin D is important to the formation of bones and the absorption of Calcium. This

however is a small part of what Vitamin D does. Some of the newer research is showing just how important Vitamin D is. In the human genetic structure, binding sites for Vitamin D can be found at many of the spots that are responsible for genetic diseases. In future research it may be discovered that Vitamin D deficiencies play a role in many human disease processes. Immune regulation is another interesting aspect of Vitamin D's role in the body. It has

been discovered that Vitamin D plays an important role in the bodies immune cells. It would seem that the anecdotal idea that more colds happen during winter may be because people are not creating enough Vitamin D.

Vitamin D in high doses can be toxic! So talk to your health care provider about what is a safe dose!

Dr. Michael Erickson , DC

—ERICKSON FAMILY—
CHIROPRACTIC

2998 Beechwood Industrial Ct
Hubertus, WI 53033
(262)-628-8535
ericksonchiro@yahoo.com

Check us out at
www.ericksonchiro.com

At Erickson Family Chiropractic, we believe in the respectful treatment for all persons and that all persons deserve the highest quality chiropractic care from birth throughout adulthood. We strive to provide quality whole body care, and to educate our patients so that they can make informed decisions about their healthcare. We feel that chiropractic should be included in the total body healthcare, including nutrition and proper exercises.



Testimonial:

"My horses' first experience with Amber was on a very cold day in January 2008. When I went to get him out of the paddock, the windchill was nearing -40 below. Needless to say he was not happy about leaving the shed. My horse and I had been having issues with "going forward" for some time, and had heard about Amber from a friend. I figured that at almost 22 years old, my horse could use all the support he could get and decided to give Amber a try.

The next time I rode him, I was amazed. We started a bit slowly, he seemed uncertain about this "new feel" in his body. But from that time on, I have not had

the "I can't go forward" issue again. He appears to be much more comfortable in the work we are doing (low level dressage) and is once again my happy, willing partner. Amber gets a very high recommendation from me and my horse!"

-Susan Montgomery and PacMan



Winter Shoveling

Please remember that when you are out shoveling that heavy snow, remember to use proper lifting techniques. Snow shoveling is similar to lifting heavy objects and the same techniques should be utilized.

Remember to minimize the amount of bending at the waist, and to utilize the knees as your main focus for lifting. Also beware of twisting while you are shoveling. Twisting and lifting heavy loads are often associated with the onset of low back pain, particularly pain associated with disk problems.

-Dr. Michael Erickson DC

