

## **Osteopathy and patient protection**

*Osteopaths are trained to recognise and treat many causes of pain. Osteopathy is an established system of diagnosis and manual treatment, which is recognised by the British Medical Association as a discrete clinical discipline.*

*Sine the 1930s, osteopaths have worked within a system of voluntary regulation that set standards of training and practice. Osteopathy became the first major complementary health care profession to be accorded statutory recognition under the 1993 Osteopaths' Act. This culminated in the opening of the statutory Register of Osteopaths by the General Osteopathic Council (GOsC) in May 1998. Only those practitioners able to show that they were in safe and competent osteopathic practice were allowed onto the register. Practitioners at the Tarka Clinic were the first in Devon to be registered with the GOsC.*

*All osteopaths need to have professional indemnity insurance and follow a strict code of conduct.*

*Patients have the same safeguards as when currently they consult a doctor or dentist. At the Tarka Clinic, all practitioners are fully registered. Dr Peter Spencer, a medically qualified osteopath, oversees the medical aspects of treatment.*

## **Can osteopathy help my child?**

*Many common problems suffered by babies and children can be treated effectively with osteopathy.*

*Problems often suffered by babies: crying and irritability, especially when lying down.*

*feeding difficulties.*

*sickness, colic and wind.*

*sleep disturbances.*

*Problems often suffered by older children:*

*musculo-skeletal problems.*

*susceptibility to infections and a depleted immune system.*

*ear infection, sometimes with a loss of hearing and 'glue ear'.*

*sinus and dental problems, with a constantly blocked or runny nose.*

*behavioural problems and learning difficulties, including poor concentration, fidgeting,*

*difficulty in sitting still and hyperactivity.*

*headache, other aches and pains.*

*asthma and vulnerability to chest infections.*

*Osteopathy may also be of help to children suffering from cerebral palsy or Down's Syndrome.*

### **Could my child suffer an adverse reaction to osteopathy?**

*Often, after treatment, the baby or child is very relaxed and sleeps well. Others have a burst of energy, and then have a good night's sleep. Occasionally children feel unsettled, but this is a temporary situation that happens when mechanical changes are occurring, and only lasts for a day or two.*

# **OSTEOPATHY FOR BABIES AND CHILDREN**

*Osteopathy is an effective and natural approach to healthcare for all life stages. Osteopaths treat babies and children for a variety of common complaints, and to ensure healthy postural development.*

*At the Tarka Clinic, one of the osteopaths specialises in the treatment of pregnant women and young babies and children*

For further details, telephone our clinic on 01271-373346, or visit our website at

[www.tarkaclinic.com](http://www.tarkaclinic.com)

## What is Osteopathy?

Osteopathy is an established system of diagnosis and treatment that lays its main emphasis on the structural integrity of the body. Osteopaths recognise that much of the pain and disability we suffer stems from abnormalities in the function of the body structures as well as damage caused to it by disease.

Osteopaths at the Tarka Clinic use many diagnostic procedures used in conventional medical assessment and diagnosis.

Osteopathy's main strength, however, lies in the unique way that the patient is assessed from a mechanical, functional and postural standpoint and in the manual methods of treatment applied to treat the individual person.

We treat a wide range of patients and conditions. Half of our workload consists of patients with low back pain, and a further quarter with neck pain. Over half are women, many being working mothers juggling the stresses of home and work life. Pregnancy can put a strain on the whole spine, and osteopathy can help the body adapt to the changes it experiences.

A quarter of patients are in their forties, perhaps losing fitness and flexibility. Osteopaths consider the whole person, and can help to alleviate current problems and prevent recurrences.

The types of injuries sustained at home or at work are changing, and the treatment modalities and management of these injuries are specialities of the Tarka Clinic practitioners.

The Tarka Clinic also offers a detailed 'Tarkascreen' preventative screening programme that concentrates on your real health needs. The assessment is carefully selected to give you the maximum information at the minimum cost. A separate leaflet gives further details on this valuable service.

## At what age should my child be treated?

Children of any age can benefit from osteopathy. Early treatment (ideally before the age of five) reduces hindrances to growth and limits the severity of any developing difficulty.

Many problems are caused around the time of birth, and the child may be left with uncomfortable stresses which can lead to problems such as suckling difficulties, irritability, colic, wind and disturbed sleep patterns. Toddlers may suffer from difficulties with mobility and play. Sleep patterns are disturbed, teething may be uncomfortable and head banging or pulling at the hair may occur.

Distortions to the head can continue to hinder the growth and development of a child's brain as it grows older. The child's behaviour may be volatile, and they may have problems with coordination and physical development. They may be vulnerable to chronic ear infections, glue ear, headaches, growing pains and stomach aches. They may be habitual mouth breathers, and suffer from developmental problems such as dyslexia, dyspraxia and attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). The child's posture may suffer too, with the head being held on one side, or one shoulder held higher than the other.

During the teenage years, the body frame undergoes a number of changes. Problems may occur because of, for example, an exaggerated spinal curve, or by sporting and recreational activities that carry the risk of sprains and strains.

Osteopathy can help the body frame adjust to the postural demands made on it. By analysing, treating and managing problems associated with growth, osteopaths make a major contribution to ensuring that young people stay fit and healthy.

## Visiting the Tarka Clinic

On your first visit to the Tarka Clinic, and before examination begins, the osteopath will discuss and record your child's medical history in detail. You will then normally be asked to remove some of your child's clothing so that a series of observations and biomechanical assessments can be made. This will allow a full diagnosis of the problem and will enable the osteopath to tailor a treatment plan to your child's needs.

The osteopath will then apply a highly developed sense of touch to identify points of weakness or excessive strain throughout the body. Further investigations may include an x-ray or blood test.

Your osteopath should make your child feel at ease and tell you what is happening throughout your consultation. You should ask questions if you have any concerns. If further medical treatment is needed the osteopath may contact your doctor, with your permission.

### Tarka Clinics Ltd

Tarka Clinics Ltd is probably the largest osteopathic practice in North Devon, and has been in existence in some form for the past 26 years. It has five osteopaths and therapists using several allied healthcare modalities, including homoeopathy, sports therapy, nutritional therapy, aromatherapy, massage, chiropody and a fully equipped rehabilitation Pilates studio. An experienced medical practitioner who is also one of the osteopaths supervises the medical aspects of the therapies.

The practice specialises in musculoskeletal problems, and the practitioners liaise extensively both with each other and with local medical practitioners, ensuring patient safety as well as comfort and effectiveness.

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