

# STEWART CHIROPRACTIC NEWS

*Taking charge of your health!*

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## BEYOND CELEBREX AND VIOXX: HOW TO QUELL INFLAMMATION NATURALLY

Damage to tissues in the body, whether traumatic or chronic, in many cases, lies at the heart of the problem that I as a chiropractor am trying to treat for most of my patients. So, understanding the process of damage and repair of these tissues is crucial to successfully treating these conditions. When tissue is injured in any manner, or a toxic substance enters our bodies, the immune system senses this and mounts an inflammatory response designed to protect the rest of the body from harm. During this process, molecules are emitted that attract white blood cells to the area. These white blood cells swoop in to remove damaged tissue, germs, or the offensive toxin from the body.

While the inflammatory response is necessary, it also causes the body to start the healing process. Unfortunately, that healing process involves the formation of scar tissue and ultimately, arthritis. In fact, research has shown that tissue inflammation is present in nearly every disease process and is, in fact, part of the mechanism underlying most chronic diseases.

### THE CHEMISTRY OF INFLAMMATION



This is where the drugs called cyclooxygenase inhibitors come in. They work by blocking the creation of inflammatory

molecules called prostaglandins, which are produced by the body after tissue injury, infection, or other type of stress. Prostaglandins control blood clotting, blood vessel constriction, inflammation, and delivery of pain signals. Cyclooxygenase, an enzyme, is involved in the first step of prostaglandin creation. There are two forms of cyclooxygenase, COX-1 and COX-2, both of which are emitted in response to injury, toxic substances, stress, or any combination of these. Conventional nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), such as aspirin, ibuprofen, and naproxen inhibit both varieties. The trouble is that COX-1 helps to protect the stomach lining, so inhibiting it can cause bleeding or other GI disturbances.

This unwanted COX-1 blocking is why drugs designed to selectively inhibit COX-2 were developed. Current brands on the market are Celebrex and Vioxx. These drugs are generally

good at relieving arthritis pain and decreasing inflammation, but these expensive "wonder" drugs also have a huge downside.

A case history of a patient of mine named Ramona will help to illustrate this. Ramona is a 48-year old female with chronic pain in the neck, both shoulders, low back, and right ankle. She had frequent episodes of digestive-related pain, which tended to get irritated when she ate certain foods or felt stressed. Ramona worked as an administrative assistant to the CEO of her firm, a position she had held for 10 years. Although she wasn't responsible for major decisions, she had to implement them. If anything went wrong, she took it personally. When Ramona had to deal with several unforeseen events in a row, she inevitably developed neck and shoulder pain. Her GI problem also flared up. In addition, a car accident when in her 20s, left Ramona with injuries that had become arthritic and painful, fueled in part by her constantly high stress levels. Even though we don't usually think of emotional stress as being physically threatening, it can result in excess levels of the stress hormones cortisol, adrenaline, and insulin circulating throughout the body, which leads to tissue inflammation. Obesity is also associated with chronic inflammation, and Ramona was 50 lbs. overweight. She went to her medical doctor who prescribed Celebrex for her arthritis pain. Before that, she had used large doses of aspirin and Advil. Although the Celebrex initially relieved the pain, after 3 months of use, it stopped working and upset her GI tract. A GI exam confirmed that Ramona had diverticulitis (inflamed out pouches of tissue in the colon.) She had to stop all anti-inflammatory medications. She suffered from chronic pain until she presented herself to this clinic.

Ramona was caught between a rock and a hard place, and she is certainly not alone. Use of NSAIDs can be potentially dangerous or even fatal. Kidney damage is well documented, as is GI irritation, which can cause peptic ulcers and diverticulitis. Either condition can lead to severe bleeding or bowel perforation, which can be life threatening. In fact, the longer an individual takes anti-inflammatory drugs, the greater the risk of side effects. Statistics show that 6 - 9 % of elderly patients will be hospitalized for complications from NSAIDs. A staggering 107,000 people are admitted to hospital

als each year with



complications from these drugs, and in 1999, an estimated 16,500 people died from using them.

The other less widely recognized problem with NSAIDs is that their continued use actually makes the arthritis worse. These drugs not only inhibit the body's ability to repair cartilage, they also accelerate its destruction. Though Celebrex and Vioxx are very popular, they haven't stood the test of time. A recent study suggested they might even increase heart attack risk.



The bottom line is this: every enzyme in our body has a purpose. When we inhibit that enzyme with a drug, we interfere with metabolic pathways. For example, we know that Cox-2 plays a critical role in modulating the immune response. It also helps regulate salt and water balance and body temperature, and it plays a role in the transmission of impulses in nerve cells in both the brain and the body. By inhibiting Cox-2's actions, we could be hindering our immune system's ability to defend us, causing the retention of water, or dehydration, or of interrupting communication among the nerve cells. Furthermore, Cox-2 is induced in the ovary and uterus during ovulation and implantation. So if you're trying to get pregnant, don't take a Cox-2 inhibitor.



Some researchers even believe that Cox-2 inhibitors interfere with the healing of preexisting gastric ulcers and aggravate colitis. This helps to explain Ramona's symptoms.

### So what do you do now?

Next month, I will present the natural way to calm inflammation, decrease stress and reverse osteoarthritis.



DR. KEVIN L. STEWART takes pride in the 10 years he has offered skilled chiropractic care to his clients. His commitment to

his patients and their health keeps him abreast of the latest technologies as well as advances in patient care. In accordance with his commitment to patient comfort, satisfaction and convenience, Stewart Chiropractic is open 5 days a week and provides emergency care 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. In treatment programs, prescribed gentle adjustments, advanced techniques, modern diagnostic and therapeutic equipment are

combined to attain optimum  
patient care.