



**OSTEOPATHIC
CENTER**
FOR CHILDREN

OSTEOPATHY & BREASTFEEDING



ABOUT OSTEOPATHY

WHAT IS OSTEOPATHY?

Osteopathic medicine is a patient-focused approach to health care that takes into account every aspect of the patient, including their physical, personal, and spiritual well-being. Developed more than 130 years ago by Andrew Taylor Still, MD, DO, osteopathic medicine brings a unique philosophy to traditional patient care. Understanding that the body is more than just a sum of its parts, osteopathic physicians (DOs) assist the patient's innate capacity to heal by addressing the interrelationship of the body's nerves, muscles, bones and organs. Osteopathic physicians are licensed to prescribe medicine and practice in all medical and surgical specialties and subspecialties.

WHAT IS A DO?

Doctors of Osteopathic Medicine, or DOs, are fully licensed physicians who practice in all specialties of medicine and receive special training in the musculoskeletal system, including how to practice OMT or osteopathic manipulative treatment.

WHAT IS OMT?

OMT is a set of techniques that DOs apply with their hands to the body to help diagnose and treat illnesses and injuries. It can be used to complement or even replace other medical interventions like medications or surgery. Although most often considered for musculoskeletal pain (like neck and back pain), it can also be used to help many other conditions including asthma, constipation, sinus infections, headaches, and more!

WHAT IS OCMM?

OCMM is Osteopathic Cranial Manipulative Medicine, and is a type of OMT used to address issues in the head, including ear infections, sinus infections, headaches, dizziness, vision problems, and more.

SUPPORTING THE BREASTFEEDING DYAD WITH OSTEOPATHY

WHAT KINDS OF BREASTFEEDING PROBLEMS CAN OMT HELP?

OMT can be used to support the breastfeeding parent and the infant if they are having nursing difficulties. Oftentimes, the same doctor will be able to help both the parent and the infant. Your doctor will take a detailed history of both the breastfeeding parent and baby to determine how they might be able to support both members of the dyad with OMT.

WHAT ISSUES IN INFANTS CAN OMT HELP ADDRESS?

OMT can be a great option to help with difficulty latching. This includes complaints such as nipple pain, nipple trauma (bleeding or cracked nipples), shallow latch, dribbling, or "clicking" while nursing. OMT can help infants open their mouths wider for a deeper latch. It can also help loosen tight muscles in the jaw or the tongue to help the infant feed better. OMT can also address tightness in the lip muscles so that lips are better able to flange (spread open) around the breast.

WHAT ISSUES IN BREASTFEEDING PARENTS CAN OMT HELP ADDRESS?

Breastfeeding parents may have issues with neck or upper back pain as they learn to support a young breastfeeding infant. They may spend several hours a day in new positions that strain these parts of the body. OMT can help reduce tension and discomfort in these areas. OMT can also help address hand/wrist pain that they may experience from holding their hands in the same position for prolonged periods of time. OMT has also been shown to benefit patients with mastitis, clogged ducts, and even low milk supply.

CAN OMT HELP WITH TONGUE TIE?

It is important to have your child examined by their doctor to determine if they have a tongue tie and what the best way to manage it might be. Some children who have tight muscles in their tongues or jaws, may have trouble nursing like babies with a tongue tie, and those babies can definitely benefit from OMT. OMT is a great option to try before a tongue tie release since it is less invasive. It can also be helpful to have an infant treated with OMT following a tongue tie release to help their body recover.

WHAT WILL OMT LOOK AND FEEL LIKE?

OMT, especially when performed on infants, is usually very soft and gentle. The doctor will examine the child or parent's whole body to know what parts of the body might need treatment. For infants with breastfeeding problems, this often includes treating the head, neck, back, and even pelvis (hips) of the baby. Many newborns and young infants will sleep through OMT treatments. Your doctor will work with your family to make sure everyone is as comfortable as possible during treatment.

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WILL OMT HELP MY BABY IN ANY OTHER WAY?

Babies who are treated with OMT to address breastfeeding concerns also may see improvement in:

- Plagiocephaly (flat head)/torticollis (twist in the neck)
- Colic/fussiness
- Reflux/spitting up
- Poor sleep

These problems are often closely tied together due to unique anatomy in the newborn's skulls and developing nervous system.

IS THERE ANY EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT THIS?

There are multiple studies that show that OMT may be beneficial for treating the breastfeeding dyad. OCMM has been formally studied for several pediatric conditions including ear infections, colic, scoliosis, cerebral palsy, and autism spectrum disorder. Dr. Frymann, DO contributed significantly to the body of pediatric osteopathic research. Most of this research consists of smaller studies and so there is a need for continued high-quality research into the benefits of OMT for all of these conditions. There is also evidence to support the use of OMT in breastfeeding parents especially in regards to recurrent mastitis.

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TREATING INFANTS,
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FOUNDED BY DR. FRYMANN IN 1992 *Osteopathy's Promise to Children is committed to stewarding her vision for a center that offers osteopathic education, research and treatment, and to provide clinical experience for health professionals in the field of osteopathy, in partnership with the Osteopathic Center for Children.*