

Healing the Brain

The brain longs to heal. After an injury, it frantically tries to regain its steady motion. That's what I find when I listen to the brain's conversations after trauma. Like a heart damaged by a heart attack, after significant trauma the brain wriggles erratically and pulsates in a much less effective manner. Even a small trauma can disrupt the brain's normal pulsations. The sooner the brain can find its way home to a regular rhythm and a powerful amplitude (strength), the quicker it—and the rest of the body—heals.

When the brain remains untreated and the injury is allowed to persist, the brain weakens to the point where it is crawling to exhaustion like a weary traveler struggling to find water in the desert. The brain remains feeble and erratic until injury shock is removed, inflammation tamed, and motion restored to the brain and its supporting structures. Then health will return.

The brain is the most complicated organ on the planet, and brain injury is incredibly complex. No one treatment modality, medication, hormone, or supplement can miraculously cure it. But helping restore the brain's motion and its fluid flow can galvanize the brain's remarkable healing powers.

As a cranial osteopathic physician, I'm lucky. I can feel how the brain is doing. I can feel which parts of the skull are restricting which parts of the brain's motion. I can feel how one or more of the dural sails have lost their flexibility or have become twisted, compromising the brain's expansion and contraction and restricting the brain's fluid pathways. Through my hands, I can feel how powerfully and completely the brain is pulsating.

I use my cranial skills not only to evaluate the brain's health but also to design effective treatments and monitor the success of those treatments. Years

of practice have shown me that with some essential help, regardless of whether the brain injury occurred yesterday or twenty years earlier, the brain has a remarkable ability to heal. But like the rest of the body, in order to heal, the brain must move. The brain, the brain's life-giving fluids, the brain's enveloping membranes, and its bony container must all move fully and freely to stop the damage and begin the healing.

Healing brain injury, as elsewhere in the body, requires a series of steps. First, the destructive parts of the injury process must be halted. Bleeding and destruction of neurons and glial cells must cease. That means that the inflammatory fires accompanying injury must be modulated. Proper fluid flow of both the cerebral spinal fluid and the venous system must be optimized to flush out the toxic debris that stokes up the inflammatory fires. All the exits for fluid removal must be wide open to channel toxins out of the brain and stop the swelling, which will otherwise cause more damage to the brain.

To manage all this, the hungry brain needs lots and lots of energy (primarily derived from glucose) and oxygen. However, trauma has created a number of impediments to the brain's energy supply system. The twists in the dura create detours or even roadblocks for venous blood and CSF to escape. If the exit pipes are constricted, that causes back pressure and swelling in the brain, making it harder for blood vessels to bring in enough glucose and oxygen. Normally, the brain uses 20 percent of our energy. Injury dramatically escalates that need.

There are solutions to all of these problems. Whether, as with Phillip, the person comes to me right after a trauma, or arrives months or years later, addressing these components of brain injury can reap tremendous rewards. The sooner treatment can be initiated, however, the better. I have repeatedly found that if a patient receives cranial treatment within forty-eight hours of the injury, as Phillip did, the symptoms of injury are markedly diminished and the patient recovers much more quickly.

HEALING PHILLIP'S BRAIN INJURY

I saw Phillip four hours after the truck hit him. The first thing I do to treat any bleeding and swelling in the brain is to give my patients homeopathic *Arnica montana* in a high potency (dose)—a minimum of 1M. Since Phillip's injury was fairly severe, I gave him the higher dose of 10M. This dose also helped his diffuse bodily trauma. Studies show that *Arnica* dramatically decreases bleeding and bruising and is especially effective in treating brain injury.

Then I very gently examined him. I had treated Phillip for many years for the mild bangs and bumps of an athletic kid. He had always been healthy.