



Chiropractic Newsletter

Your Amazing Body

“The Nose Knows”

Quick, what smells the best at Thanksgiving dinner? Hint: It's not the turkey or the pumpkin pie. Answer: it's your nose! Your amazing nose!

Your nose is amazing because every minute of every day it uses its 10 million receptors to help you detect about 10,000 different scents... some good, some not so good, some absolutely amazing like Thanksgiving dinner! But wait... your nose is more amazing than just that!

Your nose is vitally important because you breathe in and out of it, life-sustaining air, over 23,000 times a day. And it doesn't just serve as a passage way, your nose actually cleans and cools the air and prepares it for your lungs. But it's even more amazing than THAT!

Your sense of smell is more directly linked to your memories than any other sense. So things you smell today will be linked to the experiences you have with those scents for many years to come. It's hard

to imagine now, but some day when you are really old (say maybe 35 or 40 year old), the scents you smell now will trigger memories and emotions when you smell them again in the future.

For example, maybe this Thanksgiving your family gets together with your favorite relatives and you spend the day visiting and having fun while turkey and other great foods are cooking in the oven. Years from now when you smell those smells you will be reminded of those good times. Even if you don't remember the times and people exactly, you will have a sense of happy. Unfortunately, the same can be true if you have a lousy time. Those same smells might evoke a sense of sadness in the future.

Of course the same is true for any smell. The smell of chlorine or certain suntan lotions takes me back to my childhood in a flash where I spent many a happy summer at our local community pool with all of my friends. You probably already have lots of memories and feelings linked to specific smells.

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The smell of rain on hot pavement or impending snow may make you feel a certain way. The smell of cigars or skunks might make you feel another way. And the same can be said for any of the thousands of scents we can detect.

This amazing phenomenon occurs because your sense of smell is linked to a particular part of your brain. When receptors in your nose detect a scent, they produce an impulse that is sent to your brain along your olfactory nerve. That signal is processed, for example, your brain says “wet dog.” However, information about the scent is then passed on to other areas (called the limbic system) including parts of your brain that play a role in your mood, memory, behavior and emotion. In the case of wet dog that might evoke feelings of love and/or the overwhelming desire to run for old towels!

So in the future you won’t just recognize lots of different smells, but you will have memories and feelings attached to those scents for a lifetime. All of it will be stored in your nerve system just awaiting your recall. That is some storage system you’ve got there! The nose knows! What an amazing body you have!

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