



ROCKING CHAIR THERAPY

In the mid-1950's, John F. Kennedy (JFK) had severe pain, required crutches, and was desperate to the point of giving up his political career after failing to get relief with multiple back surgeries. Some say he even considered suicide. He was referred to Janet Travel, MD, noted pain and rehabilitation specialist. She hospitalized JFK and literally brought a rocking chair into the hospital and prescribed rocking several times a day. JFK continued regular rocking right into the White House and several photographs popularized rocking chair therapy. Since JFK, not much has been said or written about the health benefits of rocking, likely because there has not been, until now, a plausible explanation as to why rocking has any health benefit. For those with AA, an argument can now be made that "rocking" must be an essential part of therapy.

THE OLD BELIEF: The only health benefit of rocking that has been published is that it relieves back spasm.

OUR NEW BELIEF: Rocking in a chair is now believed to accelerate spinal fluid flow. We know that lumbar-sacral AA causes a weakening of the arachnoid-dural spinal canal covering with distension of the lower canal (thecal sac). This produces stasis and pooling of spinal fluid which collects biologic-metabolic waste including toxic, inflammatory substances. Many persons with AA perceive fluid pooling to be a "spinal fluid leak" because the stasis effect deprives the upper canal and brain of adequate fluid pressure and a normal fluid flow. The pooling of fluid in the lower spinal canal may cause, eye, nose, or ear symptoms.

NECESSITY OF NORMAL SPINAL FLUID FLOW: Spinal fluid turns over (made anew) about every 4 to 6 hours. Its normal functions include lubrication between nerve roots to prevent friction and inflammation, carry nutrients to the cauda equina, and wash out biologic-metabolic waste such as inflammation particles.

OTHER SPINAL FLUID FLOW ENHANCERS: Besides a rocking chair, we have received enough clinical reports to believe that the following may also accelerate spinal fluid flow and prevent stasis and pooling:

- Walking on or slight bouncing on a trampoline
- Walking with arm swings
- Swinging-porch type
- Deep breathing



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