

## Frequently Asked Questions About Chiropractic

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### What is Chiropractic?

Chiropractic is based on the scientific fact that your body is a self-regulating, self-healing organism. These important functions are controlled by the Central Nervous system which contains brain, spinal cord, and all the nerves of the body. The skull protects the delicate tissues of the brain. The moving bones of the spine protect the vulnerable communication pathways of the spinal cord and nerve roots. If the nervous system has an interference in it, it can cause malfunction of the tissues and organs throughout the body. Doctors of Chiropractic call this the **Vertebral Subluxation**. The Chiropractic adjustment has been proven to increase motion, increase circulation, reduce swelling and pain, and remove nervous interference. Once this nervous interference is removed, your body is able to do what it is designed to do - **heal itself without any out any drugs or surgery**.

### What do Doctors of Chiropractic do?

Chiropractic is the Philosophy, Science, and Art that concerns itself with the restoration of good health by restoring and maintaining a properly functioning nervous system, without the use of drugs or surgery. Chiropractors restore proper motion to joints that are not moving properly. Helping to restore proper spinal biomechanics and improved nervous system function begins with a case history. Your case history is vital as it reveals the health background about your about your past, such as a traumatic birth, or just sitting at work all day, and other details which brought you into the office. After reviewing your history and discussing your specific problem, a thorough hands on chiropractic examination, x-rays if needed, and computerized diagnostic testing will be done.

### What Type of Education do Doctors of Chiropractic get?

Today's Doctor of Chiropractic is well educated. The science of chiropractic requires a special emphasis on anatomy, physiology, pathology, neurology, biomechanics, X-ray, spinal adjusting techniques and related subjects. This demanding curriculum prepares chiropractic doctors to locate the Vertebral Subluxation and help correct the resulting nervous system dysfunction.

Before beginning Chiropractic school, chiropractic students need to complete 4 years of undergraduate education to obtain the necessary prerequisites and a Bachelors Degree. A chiropractic student then completes 4 years of graduate school to receive a Doctor of Chiropractic degree. However the testing is not done. Each candidate must

then pass both National and State board examinations in order to receive a license to practice chiropractic. A chiropractic education never ends. Most doctors continue to educate themselves by taking postgraduate courses and staying current by reading the latest scientific research. *After undergraduate studies, today's chiropractic doctor completes an additional four-year curriculum of over 4,500 classroom hours of health sciences.*

### **What is an Adjustment?**

A chiropractic adjustment is the art of using a specific force in a precise direction, applied to a joint that is subluxated. An adjustment adds motion to the joint, helping the bones gradually return to a more normal position and motion, taking un-needed pressure off of the nervous system. The purpose of this safe and natural procedure is improved spinal function, improved nervous system function, and improved health. There are hundreds of ways to adjust the spine. Usually, the doctor's hands or a specially designed instrument delivers a brief and highly accurate thrust. Some adjusting methods are quick, whereas others require a slow constant pressure.

*After years of training and clinical experience, each chiropractic doctor becomes highly skilled in the delivery of a variety of adjusting approaches.*

### **Do I Have a Pinched Nerve?**

Many patients consult a doctor of Chiropractic because they think they have a pinched nerve. While commonly associated with the spine, a pinched nerve is actually rare. Research suggests that only 10%-15% of spine related problems are caused by direct pressure of bone on a nerve. Typically a 'pinched nerve' will result in numbness, burning, or a 'pins and needles' feeling. When a bone pushes on a nerve, this is a serious condition that requires immediate attention.

Several other possibilities exist that can also cause numbness and/or a burning sensation. Nerves are more commonly stretched or irritated, which will produce a numbness feeling. *If you have numbness, see your chiropractor for a detailed and thorough examination.*

### **Do I Have a Slipped Disc?**

No, it is not possible for discs to slip. The disc is a cushion-like tissue located between two vertebrae, which acts as shock absorber for the spine. The centre of the disc is made of a fluid, soft, 'jelly-like' substance. When discs become damaged, tears can occur through which the soft centre can leak out and push on the nerves. This is known as a ruptured or herniated disc and is extremely painful. While results cannot be guaranteed, many patients have avoided needless surgery or a dependency on pain pills, by choosing chiropractic care for their disc-related health problems. **In fact chiropractic adjustments are safer than back surgery, muscle relaxers, and even aspirin!**

*Discs do not 'slip,' however, if damaged they can leak or rupture.*

### **Are All Patients Adjusted the Same Way?**

No, each patient is adjusted according to their unique requirements. Your chiropractor will determine the best way to adjust your spine after completing a detailed Chiropractic examination. Chiropractors may adjust your entire spine, even though you don't have pain in that area. Pain is a poor indicator of problems as many problems refer pain into other areas. Some patients who complain of headaches may actually have a lower back problem that is causing a compensation reaction at the base of the skull. Other patients

may be experiencing numbness and tingling in their fingers when the actual problem is in the neck. While visits may seem similar, each visit builds on the one before. *Chiropractic care is customized to each patient's age, condition, and spinal problem.*

### **Can I Adjust Myself?**

Since a chiropractic adjustment is a specific force, applied in a specific direction, to a specific joint, it is impossible to adjust oneself; and also dangerous. Spinal adjusting may look easy when done by an experienced Chiropractor, but it has taken several years to master - just a gymnast makes walking on a balance beam seem easy. Turning and twisting your back and neck may create a 'popping' sound, however this usually causes an unstable area of the spine even more unsteady. Remember the goal of the adjustment is to get joints moving that are not moving and taking pressure off the nervous system. Twisting your back will cause unstable joints to become more unstable. Spinal adjusting is not for amateurs! The best way to enjoy the healthful benefits of chiropractic is to receive adjustments from a Doctor of Chiropractic. Even your doctor must seek out the services of another colleague to help restore and maintain proper spinal function.

### **Is Chiropractic Care Safe?**

There are literally thousands of published scientific studies proving Chiropractic's safety and effectiveness. In the words of the New Zealand government's inquiry, chiropractic care is "**remarkably safe.**" Chiropractic has an excellent safety record. It is the result of a conservative approach to health that avoids invasive procedures or addictive drugs. **In fact, chiropractic adjustments are safer than back surgery, muscle relaxers and even aspirin!**

### **What Can I do to Help My Healing?**

Chiropractic care is a natural approach to better health that is proven safe and effective. There's a lot you can do to give yourself the best chance for a quick recovery. Learn proper sitting and lifting methods. Specific exercises may be suggested to help retrain the muscles that support the spine. Proper rest is an important aspect of the healing process, too. Get the appropriate amount of rest your body needs and avoid sleeping on your stomach.

During the healing process, proper nutrition is more important than ever. Make sure you eat balanced meals, and if you're overweight, now would be a good time to slim down and reduce unnecessary stresses to your spine. Perhaps most important of all, keep your appointments and follow your chiropractic doctor's recommendations for optimum results. *Proper rest, exercise, and good nutrition are especially important during the healing process.*

### **Do Children Need To Be Adjusted?**

#### **Can I Be Too Old For A Chiropractic Adjustment?**

Since significant spinal trauma can occur at birth, many parents have their newborns checked for the Vertebral Subluxation. Later, learning to walk, riding a bicycle, and other childhood activities can cause spinal problems. While a bandage and some comforting words can help a skinned knee, the unseen damage to the child's spine is the unique domain of a Chiropractic doctor. Many childhood health complaints that are brushed off as "growing pains" can often be traced to the spine. Regular Chiropractic check-ups can identify these problems and help avoid many of the health complaints seen later in adults.

Naturally, Chiropractic adjusting procedures are modified to a child's spine. Most parents report that their children enjoy their Chiropractic adjustments and seem healthier than other children.

*Chiropractic has been shown to be helpful with scoliosis and many other so-called "normal" childhood health problems.*

More and more people are consulting chiropractic doctors, especially in their later years. With growing concerns about over-medication and the side effects of combining various prescription drugs, safe, natural chiropractic care is growing in popularity. Restoring better spinal function can help improve mobility, vitality, endurance and appetite. Many patients report improvement with arthritic symptoms and other chronic ailments often associated with the aging process. The adjusting technique used by your doctor will be modified for maximum comfort and results. As we get older and wiser, the simplicity and effectiveness of Chiropractic care becomes more and more obvious. *Regardless of your age, chiropractic care can help improve mobility and maintain vitality.*

### **How Long Will I Need Chiropractic Care?**

Neglecting spinal problems is the same as neglecting health problems. Your health doesn't take a break when you need one. Nervous system function and spinal function go hand in hand. When is it OK not to brush your teeth, or drink water, or exercise? Since early childhood you may have gained unhealthy habits which affect your spinal posture. To take care of this later on in life will require time. Ongoing supportive care for optimum spinal function which keeps stress off of the nervous system is highly recommended. Most patients find that periodic chiropractic check-ups help keep them in tip-top shape. Those who are active, have stressful jobs, or want to be their very best, find that a schedule of preventive visits are helpful in the maintenance of good health. Some patients seek chiropractic care only when their ache or pain becomes unbearable. Unfortunately this style of 'crisis management' is usually more costly and time-consuming in the long run. How long you decide to benefit from chiropractic care is always up to you. *Periodic chiropractic check-ups, like brushing and flossing your teeth, getting regular exercise, and eating wholesome foods is part of a healthy lifestyle.*