



**Ask
Dr. Michael
The Pain Expert**



Dr. Michael Clifford

Back Pain

Why do I have back pain, and what can I do about it? Teresa C.

Pain of any kind, at any age, is a sign that something is wrong. Back pain is all too common these days, from the mild aches and pains we put up with on a daily basis, to the more severe, sharp shooting pain that can cause tremendous suffering and disability. It is important to accurately identify the cause of back pain early so that an effective plan of treatment can be implemented to resolve your pain and allow you to live your life fully and vigorously, as well as to prevent the deterioration that can cause worse problems from developing in the future.

Two Common Causes

Back pain is often muscular in origin, such as a strain that results from overuse or injury, or it can be caused by some dysfunction, misalignment or injury to vertebral joints or discs. Often these joint or disc problems will also cause muscle spasms and pain which will require a two-pronged approach to treatment. (Other potential causes of back pain, such as pain referred from some other pathological process in the body, would also be assessed and appropriate measures implemented.) Muscle pain can be effectively treated with rest, heat, massage, analgesics and anti-inflammatories. Pain that does not resolve with these treatments often indicate joint or disc problems and should be assessed as soon as possible. Pain originating in joint and disc dysfunction or injury require treatments targeting these issues.

The Chiropractic Approach

Misalignments of vertebral joints can cause pressure and inflammation of nerve roots causing pain and dysfunction. As one ages affected joints can show degeneration, and disc bulges or herniation can develop with significant pain, impairment of movement and restriction of activities of daily life. Specific chiropractic adjustments are utilized and targeted to correct these misalignments and improve spinal function. By restoring the way your spine works, discs and soft tissues may heal, nerve irritation may be reduced, and pain can ease dramatically and improved stability return. More severe cases involving disc herniation may require surgery as a last resort, but a course of treatment utilizing spinal decompression has often been shown to be an effective alternative, restoring discs to their proper position and allowing healing. Adjunct treatments that can speed healing and recovery and reduce pain include ultrasound diathermy, TENS, cold laser and far infrared therapy.

The Chiropractic Approach

Chiropractic works because you are a self-healing, self-regulating organism controlled by your nervous system. Millions of instructions flow from your brain, down the spinal cord, and out to every organ and tissue. Signals sent back to the brain confirm if the muscles, organs, and glands are working correctly. Improper motion or position of the moving bones of the spine can interfere with this vital exchange by irritating nerves and compromising the function of affected organs and tissues. Specific spinal adjustments improve mind/body communications. Health often returns with improved nervous system control of the body.

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