

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT CHIROPRACTIC

**Who are Chiropractors?** Doctors of Chiropractic are neuromusculoskeletal specialists. This means they specialize in nerves, muscles and bones. They pay particular attention to the spine because it affects so many health conditions. Today's chiropractors undergo **a minimum of six years university education and training** to enable them to treat many conditions **without the use of drugs or surgery**. This includes 4500 hours of classroom and clinical instruction at an institution approved by the Council on Chiropractic Education (CCEC). Chiropractors must also pass national and provincial licensing examinations at the end of their training. And they must take rigorous training and upgrading on a yearly basis.

**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 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 is impaired, it can cause malfunction of the tissues and organs throughout the body. Doctors call this the Vertebral Subluxation Complex. Vertebral, meaning the bones of the spine. Subluxation, meaning less than a total dislocation. And Complex, meaning consisting of more than one part.

Doctors of Chiropractic restore the function of your spine. By doing this, we gently free your nervous system to allow your body to coordinate and heal itself. **With improved spinal function there is improved nervous system function.** Your chiropractor can help remove interferences that may be impairing normal health. Since the primary focus of your care is improved nervous system function, chiropractic can have a positive effect on many health conditions not normally thought as of "back" problems.

**Why do people see chiropractors?** Most people first see chiropractors for treatment of headaches and back pain. Many others realize that similar treatments can be effective for migraines, shoulder problems, carpal tunnel syndrome, tennis elbow, knee pain and most work and sports related injuries. **Improving overall health and well being by optimizing nervous system function** is an ounce of **prevention** that helps stop problems before they start!

**Can I speed the healing process?** While there aren't any shortcuts to speed your body's natural healing process, there's a lot you can do to give yourself the best chance of a quick recovery.

Learn proper sitting and lifting methods. Specific exercises may be suggested to help retrain the muscles that support your 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 chiropractor's recommendations for optimum results.**

**How long will I need chiropractic care?** How long you decide to benefit from chiropractic care is always up to you.

Spinal problems, neglected since early childhood, may require ongoing supportive care for optimum spinal function. These long-standing problems are often associated with muscle weakness, soft tissue damage, and degenerative changes to the spine. Most patients find that periodic chiropractic checkups 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. While this style of “crisis management” is usually more costly and time-consuming, our office stands ready to help all patients, regardless of their health goals.

**If there is no pain, should I still see a chiropractor?** Our bodies are truly amazing machines. To minimize nerve interference from subluxations, muscles tighten up to “splint” the joints involved and decrease their movement. Usually, your body does such a good job that you won’t even be aware of this. Our bodies have a great ability to compensate for small regions that are not moving correctly. **As a result, you can have subluxations that can hide for years without you becoming aware of them. Pain only happens when your spine cannot compensate any longer.** It may be necessary to carry out treatment after the immediate symptoms (i.e., pain and immobility) have been eliminated.

**Why do children need chiropractic care?** Since significant spinal trauma can occur at birth, many parents have their newborns checked for the Vertebral Subluxation Complex.

As children get older, learning to walk, ride 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 checkups 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.

**Can I adjust myself?** Since a chiropractic adjustment is a specific force, applied in a specific direction, to a specific spinal joint, **it is virtually impossible to adjust oneself.**

It is possible to turn or bend or twist in certain ways to create a “popping” sound, like the sound that sometimes accompanies a chiropractic adjustment. Unfortunately, this type of joint manipulation is usually counterproductive, often making an already unstable area of the spine even more unsteady. Adjusting the spine is not for amateurs, and without proper training and experience it can actually be dangerous. **Only a chiropractor is appropriately trained to safely adjust the spine.**

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 it safer for me to take over-the-counter medications rather than visit a chiropractor?**

Good question. Most drugs only mask the symptoms; they do not actually correct the underlying cause.

Many people think nothing of taking pain relievers or drugs to reduce pain, often caused by inflammation. Let’s look at the reality. **It is a scientific fact that the risk of serious complications or even death attributed to the use of NSAIDS (drugs for reducing inflammation like aspirin and ibuprofen) is greater than the slight risk of injury with chiropractic treatment for neck pain.** Not many of us think of these risks when we reach for a bottle of pills. The bottom line is simple – chiropractic care is safe and effective and involves less risk than most medications or medical interventions.

**If you have any further questions, contact:**

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