

Chiropractic FAQ For Patients

How does chiropractic work?

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 your body is working right. It's like a telephone system. Improper motion or position of the moving bones of the spine can irritate nerves and interrupt this vital communication.

Think of a poor phone connection; even a little static can prevent vital information from being sent and received. Nerve "static" can cause organs and muscles to malfunction. Chiropractic adjustments work by eliminating this static, restoring proper function to the nervous system so the body can heal.

Do I have a pinched nerve?

A pinched nerve is rare. It is more likely that an adjacent spinal bone irritates, stretches, rubs or chafes a nerve. These subluxations distort the nerve messages sent between the brain and the body. This can produce unhealthy alterations to the organs and tissues connected by the affected nerves.

Do I have a slipped disc?

The disc is a soft pulpy "shock absorber". It has a fibrous outer ring which holds in a jelly-like material. A "slipped disc" is a common way to refer to a wide variety of disc problems. However, a disc can't slip because of the way it attaches to the spinal bones above and below it. A disc can bulge. It can tear. It can herniate. It can thin. It can dry out. And it can collapse. But it can't slip.

How do you get subluxations?

There are three basic causes of subluxations. Physical causes include slips and falls, accidents, repetitive motions, poor posture habits, and improper lifting. Emotions such as grief, anger, and fear affect your physical tension and cause subluxations. Chemical causes include alcohol, drugs, pollution, and poor diet.

How do I know if I have a subluxation?

You can have subluxations and not even know it. Like the early stages of tooth decay or cancer, subluxations can be present before warning signs appear. The results of a thorough examination can show the location and severity of subluxations you may have.

Can subluxations clear up on their own?

Sometimes. Today's hectic lifestyles are a constant source of subluxations. Fortunately, our bodies have the ability to self-correct many of these problems as we bend and stretch, or when we sleep at night. When subluxations don't resolve, you need to see a chiropractic doctor.

What's an adjustment?

Chiropractic adjustments usually involve a quick thrust that helps add motion to spinal joints that aren't moving right. Some methods use the doctor's hands; technology has advanced in chiropractic, however, and many now use instruments to painlessly adjust the spine.

Are chiropractic adjustments safe?

Yes. A New Zealand government study found that adjustments are "remarkably safe". By avoiding drugs and risky surgery, chiropractic care enjoys an excellent track record. A

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thorough exam can identify the rare person for whom chiropractic care might be unsuitable. Compare the statistics. Adjustments are about 100 times safer than taking over-the-counter pain reliever.

Will adjustments make my spine too loose?

No. Only the spinal joints that are “locked up” receive adjustments. This allows weakened muscles and ligaments to stabilize and heal.

Can the bones move too much?

Highly unlikely. A chiropractic adjustment is special. It has the right amount of energy, delivered to an exact spot, at a precise angle, at just the right time. The intent is to get a “stuck” spinal joint moving again, helping to reduce nerve interference. Years of training, practice, and experience make chiropractic adjustments specific and safe.

What makes the sound during the adjustment?

Lubricating fluids separate the bones of each spinal joint. Some adjusting methods can produce a sound when the gas and fluids in the joint shift. It’s much like opening a bottle of champagne or removing a suction cup. The sound is interesting, but it isn’t a guide to the quality or value of the adjustment.

Are all patients adjusted the same way?

No. Each patient’s spine and care plan is unique. With 24 moving bones in the spine, each of which can move in seven different directions, we see a wide variety of spinal patterns. Each patient’s care is custom-tailored for his or her age, condition, and health goals.

Can I adjust myself?

No. Some people can make their joints “pop”, but that’s not an adjustment! Worse, damage

can occur by mobilizing a joint with weakened muscles and ligaments. Adjustments are specific, and the skills required take years to master. Even your chiropractic doctor must consult a colleague for an adjustment.

How many adjustments will I need?

The number of adjustments varies with each patient and his or her individual health goals. Many patients sense progress within a week or two of frequent visits. Visits become less often as your spine stabilizes. Caught early, treatment can be simple; chronic problems with arthritis for example may take much longer to correct.

Why do newborns get adjustments?

Even today’s “natural” childbirth methods can affect an infant’s spine. Preliminary studies suggest that colic, unusual crying, poor appetite, ear infections, or interrupted sleep cycles can be signs of spinal distress. Children’s adjustments are even more gentle than those for adults. Knowing exactly where to adjust, the doctor applies no more pressure than you’d use to test the ripeness of a tomato.

Can I have chiropractic care after back surgery?

Yes. Rest assured that your chiropractic doctor will avoid the surgically modified areas of your spine. Medical studies state that it is quite likely that pain will return just above or below the surgical area. These areas will be the focus of your chiropractic care.

Can patients with osteoporosis get chiropractic care?

Of course. Osteoporosis doesn’t cause back pain unless there are compression fractures, which your chiropractor will rule out before treatment. When developing a treatment plan,

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your chiropractic doctor considers the unique circumstances of each patient. Technological advancements in chiropractic care make adjusting extremely safe and effective, even for those with fragile bones.

Can patients with cancer get chiropractic care?

Absolutely. While undergoing radiation therapy it is wise to consult your primary cancer physician just to be safe. Your chiropractor will take all necessary precautions to keep you safe. Chiropractic care can be quite effective in soothing common back pain, headaches and other discomforts that cancer survivors face.

How long until I'll feel better?

Some patients experience almost instant relief. Others discover it can take many weeks or months. Many factors can affect the healing process. How long have you had your problem? Are you keeping your appointments? Are you getting the proper rest, exercise and nutrition? Do you smoke? Are you in otherwise good condition? Within a short period of time, most patients sense enough progress to fully carry out their doctors' recommendations.

How long will I need chiropractic care?

After patients get the relief they want, many choose to continue with some type of periodic care. These patients show up for their visits feeling great. These visits can help support the final stages of healing and help detect and resolve new problems before they become serious. Our job is to offer the very best care and your job is to decide how much of it you want.

Will I receive any medication for my pain?

No. Chiropractic doctors don't dispense drugs. Because we rely on natural methods, we can show you how to use ice therapy to control

painful symptoms. When properly applied, ice can have a dramatic pain-relieving effect, without the side effects of pain medications.

Why don't medical practitioners and chiropractic doctors get along?

That's changing. Years of prejudice and bias are giving way to research showing the benefits of chiropractic care. Attitudes are slow to change. However, as the public demands alternatives to drugs and surgery, more and more medical practitioners are referring their patients to our office.

What if my policy doesn't cover chiropractic?

Your health affects everything you do and everyone you know. It is your most valuable possession. Yet, each of us is free to place a different value on our health. It's convenient when an insurance company or third party helps to pay the bill. But be careful! Don't allow the profit motive of a huge corporation to make the decision for you. Find out how we make chiropractic care affordable for just about anyone.

Will I ever be normal again?

Patient results vary. Many report improved spinal curves and the total resumption of their normal lifestyles. Those who neglected or delayed seeking care often see slower progress. After improvement, many patients discover that periodic chiropractic checkups can help avoid a relapse.

What if chiropractic doesn't work?

If we're unable to find and correct the cause of your particular health problem, we will refer you to other specialists who may be able to help. Your health is our primary goal.

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"I don't believe in chiropractic."

While chiropractic is different, it certainly isn't something that you have to "believe in" for it to work. Do you have to believe in antibiotics? Instead, chiropractic results are produced by adhering to scientifically confirmed facts and over a century of clinical results.

"If you start, do you have to go for the rest of your life?"

How long you decide to benefit from chiropractic care is always up to you. Since many spinal problems get started from traumatic births, accidents, or other long-standing problems, permanent correction can be difficult. Years of muscle damage, scar tissue, and ligament instability can set the stage for a relapse. Some patients find a program of supportive care (like regularly brushing your teeth) to be helpful.

After enjoying initial relief, many patients choose to continue with periodic checkups. Decide for yourself whether you want temporary relief, care to stabilize and strengthen the spine, or wellness care to help prevent future pain.

"Aren't chiropractic results just a 'Placebo Effect'?"

This is a convenient claim made by critics who have chosen to overlook convincing proof to the contrary. The placebo effect depends on the power of suggestion. Yet chiropractic results have been enjoyed by newborns, infants, pets that have been hit by cars, and others for whom the power of suggestion is impossible! Plus, there are alterations to a patient's spine from chiropractic care. Many see dramatic changes when they compare x-ray views taken before and after a period of care. Other tests show improved range of motion and flexibility.

There's no question that the power of suggestion can be an important ally in the healing process. However, it can't begin to explain the millions of patients who have been helped with chiropractic care.

"I've heard chiropractic wears out your joints."

Chiropractic care can help prevent joints from wearing out! Bones don't "rub" on each other. Instead, each joint is enclosed in a "capsule" of fluid that should offer a lifetime of friction-free movement. When there is a loss of proper motion or position of spinal bones, this movement can be restricted. Spinal joints above or below attempt to make up the difference by moving too much. Obviously, areas of too much movement are left to stabilize during the healing process. Instead, chiropractic spinal adjustments are directed only to those areas that are "stuck" and not moving enough.

"Is chiropractic care safe?"

Critics mislead by suggesting that adjustments to the neck can subject patients to unnatural stress or compromise blood supply to the brain. But, if the spine were that fragile, people would fear bending over to tie their shoe laces or looking up to enjoy the stars at night!

Thousands will die this year from anesthesia or needless back surgeries. Thousands more will perish from common aspirin or destroy their kidneys from so-called "safe" pain medicines. Adverse reactions to prescription medication are the fourth leading cause of death in the United States. Meanwhile, the rare complications from chiropractic care can be counted on one hand! The statistics for chiropractic care causing a fatality is less than One in 6 Million!

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