

New Patients

On your first visit to the chiropractor, you will find the doctor concerned about you as a person, as well as about your complaint. Your chiropractor will try to find the cause of your ailment and correct it with a thorough and cost-effective approach. Your doctor of chiropractic will emphasize communication and openness, and you should feel free to ask the doctor or staff any questions about your treatment.

What to Expect

Your first visit to the chiropractic office will be similar to a first visit to other doctor's offices, with some important additions.

Case History: The doctor will take a full case history of your problem, and any important past history or family history will be considered. A clear understanding of the nature and extent of your illness helps the doctor decide whether chiropractic health care is appropriate treatment for your condition, and if additional examination procedures are necessary.

Examination: Your doctor will perform a physical examination, plus spinal and musculoskeletal examination procedures are required. The reason for these exams is to find the cause of your problem.

X-rays: X-rays are sometimes taken for spinal or musculoskeletal problems. These x-rays are safe and help to rule out disease processes of the bones and to surrounding tissues, as well as to evaluate the structural and biomechanical status of your spine.

Lab Procedures: It is sometimes necessary to recommend blood and urine analysis or other procedures. Your doctor will explain the necessity of these tests if they are required.

The Treatment Plan

Your doctor will put considerable effort into fully explaining your condition. The cause of the problem, as well as the recommended treatment plan and goals will be discussed. You will have the opportunity to ask questions and express any concerns that you have. This "team effort" between you and your doctor can greatly enhance a successful outcome.

The RAND Corporation is currently conducting a study to explore the effects of patient compliance. Most chiropractors believe that patients who are involved in the design of the treatment plan, agree to treatment goals, and

are active in implementing them, have more successful results than patients who are not involved.

Progress Evaluation

Your progress under chiropractic care will be carefully monitored. The subjective improvement as well as the objective findings will be noted, and your treatment plan will be modified to meet your changing condition.

Qualifications of the Doctor of Chiropractic

Chiropractic colleges require a minimum of six to seven academic years of post-high school education. A foundation in the basic medical sciences and medical courses includes coursework in anatomy, biochemistry, microbiology, general diagnostics, radiology, physiology, pathology, nutrition, and public health. In addition, chiropractic education involves a detailed study of clinical sciences as well as clinical experience. Your doctor of chiropractic receives expert training in musculoskeletal disorders and their relationship to other illnesses. Many chiropractic doctors also continue their education in specialty areas such as radiology, sports medicine, orthopedics, nutrition, or neurology.

Chiropractic is licensed in all fifty states and the District of Columbia. State Board examinations are required by all states before a practitioner can begin practice. Chiropractic care is approved by most private and governmental insurance plans, Medicare, worker's compensation, and automobile accident insurance.

Chiropractic Philosophy

Your chiropractic doctor promotes the philosophy of wellness and disease prevention. Chiropractic care utilizes most natural health methods such as exercise, nutrition and diet, and lifestyle modification. In some cases, chiropractic treatment can help a patient to avoid surgery and other invasive procedures.

Professional Accountability

Most doctors, including chiropractors, have a network of consultants available for referral when necessary. Chiropractic is one of the first health care professions to work on designing, adopting, and implementing practice guidelines which will benefit both the doctor and the patient.

Why People Choose to Consult a Chiropractic Physician

Most patients consult a doctor of chiropractic for one of the following reasons:

1. **Research supports chiropractic treatment of neuromusculoskeletal conditions and suggests wider applications.** Several studies support the effectiveness of chiropractic treatment for certain conditions. In 1990, a British medical doctor concluded that chiropractic treatment of patients with chronic or severe back pain was more effective and more long-lasting than hospital outpatient treatment [Meade, et al. *British Medical Journal*, 300:1431 (1990)]. A 1991 Dutch study comparing chiropractic with physical therapy for the treatment of back and neck complaints, found that patients showed greater improvement with chiropractic treatment [Koes, et al. *British Medical Journal*, 304:601 (1992)]. In addition to receiving noted success in the treatment of back pain, there is research that suggests chiropractic may be helpful in the drug-free treatment of headache and menstrual pain [Vernon, *Journal of Manipulative and Physiological Therapeutics*, 5:109 (1982); Kokjohn et al, *Journal of Manipulative and Physiological Therapeutics*, 15:279 (1992)].
2. **Chiropractic has a large growing body of evidence supporting its effectiveness.** Only about 15 percent of all medical interventions are supported by solid scientific evidence, according to David Eddy, M.D., Ph.D., professor of health policy and management at Duke University. In contrast, Paul Shekelle, M.D., MPH, a leading researcher at the prestigious RAND Corporation, noted on ABC's 20/20 that regarding low-back pain, "There are considerably more randomized controlled trials which show benefit of this [chiropractic] than there are for many, many other things which physicians and neurosurgeons do all the time."
3. **Patient Satisfaction.** In a recent study, back pain patients were found to be more satisfied with the care they received from a chiropractor than that received from a family physician [Cherkin, MacCornack, *Western Journal of Medicine*, 150:351-355 (1989)]. A Gallup Poll reported in 1991 that almost 18.7 million Americans had used chiropractic services during that year and more than 90 percent of those polled said their treatment was effective.

Cost Effectiveness

In addition to research on chiropractic's effectiveness, a number of reports have shown chiropractic to be more cost-effective than traditional medical care for certain neuromusculoskeletal disorders. A study of worker's

compensation claims in Utah found that patients under chiropractic care lost fewer workdays and returned to work sooner than patients treated by traditional medicine. In addition, chiropractic treatment was found to be less expensive than medical care [Jarvis, Phillips, et al, *Journal of Occupational Medicine*. 33:847 (1991)]. A Virginia economic study concluded that "...evidence shows chiropractic to provide important therapeutic benefits, at economical costs" and encouraged its use in managed care [Schifrin, *The Virginia Study of Mandated Insurance*, 1992)]. As health costs spiral upward, current research supports the consideration of chiropractic treatment as a responsible means to control health care expenditures.

So...if you are looking for an effective, natural, noninvasive, drugless approach to health care that treats YOU as a whole person, chiropractic may be your answer.