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Answers to Questions about Chiropractic

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. Improper motion or position of the moving bones of the spine called a "subluxation" can interfere with this vital exchange by irritating nerves and compromising the function of affected organs and tissues. Specific spinal adjustments can help improve mind/body communications. Health often returns with improved nervous system control of the body.

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 bone above and below it. But 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.

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.

How do you get subluxations?

There are three basic causes of subluxations. Physical causes could include slips and falls, accidents, repetitive motions and improper lifting. Emotions, such as grief, anger and fear can cause subluxations. Chemical causes could 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, an instrument, a special table, or the force of gravity. There are many ways to 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 thorough exam can identify the rare person for whom chiropractic care might be unsuited. Compare the statistics. Adjustments are safer than taking an 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 bone 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 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 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 (that can each move in seven different directions!) we see a wide variety of spinal patterns. Each patient's care is custom tailored for their 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 take years to master. Even your chiropractic doctor must consult a colleague to benefit from chiropractic care.

How many adjustments will I need?

The number of adjustments varies with each patient and their individual health goals. Many patients sense progress within a week or two of frequent visits. Visits become less often as your spine stabilizes. In chronic cases, complete healing can take months or even years.

Why do newborns get adjustments?

Even today's "natural" childbirth methods can affect an infant's spine. Preliminary studies suggested that colic, unusual crying, poor appetite, ear infections or erratic sleeping habits can be signs of spinal distress. Pediatric adjustments are gentle. 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. Surgery often causes instability above or below the involved level. These areas will be the focus of your chiropractic care.

Can patients with osteoporosis get chiropractic care?

Of course. When developing a care plan, your chiropractic doctor considers the unique circumstances of each patient. There are many ways to adjust the spine. The method selected will be best suited to your age, size and health.

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 complete their doctor's 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 to control painful symptoms. When properly applied, ice can have an analgesic 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 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 life. Those who have 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 to other specialists who may be able to help. Your health is our only goal.

If you have questions we haven't answered here, please call. We know that the more you learn about chiropractic, the better it looks. It's safe. It's natural. And it works. It's a simple idea that has stood the test of time and helped millions enjoy relief and better health.

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