

Chiropractors

Treating More Than Spines

By Charlene Pierce

Chiropractic care is a holistic approach to health and wellness that focuses on the whole body

and the whole person. It is a preventative approach that can keep you feeling happy, healthy, and active.

Chiropractors are trained to adjust and treat your entire neuromusculoskeletal system. This includes nerves, muscles, ligaments, tendons, and bones. Your spine has 31 pairs of nerves weaving through and around 100 joints, 120 muscles, and 220 ligaments. Your spine is the primary conductor of information to your brain and throughout your body. The bad news is: If one nerve or muscle is repressed and not functioning at optimum levels, it affects your entire body. The good news? When your spine is operating at peak performance, it has the potential to heal your whole body.

One of the reasons that adequate sleep is so important to good health is that the body heals during sleep. The pituitary gland releases hormones that help your body grow and repair. Cells are rejuvenated during sleep. When pain or pressure in your back or neck keep you from sleeping, your entire healing system goes haywire.

Chiropractic care can also restore impaired mobility, allowing you to be more physically active, which increases the strength of your lungs, heart, and muscles. When your body is in alignment, it is working at prime levels—all the nerves in your spine are firing, and your brain has everything it needs. This whole-body health is the benefit of chiropractic care.

The goal of a chiropractor is to keep your spine and entire musculoskeletal system properly aligned so it can heal itself. Usually, people seek chiropractic care due to back or neck pain.

Chiropractors will make adjustments with their hands or other non-invasive tools to alleviate pressure. The “pop” you hear during the adjustments is from the ligaments snapping around the joint as trapped nitrogen bubbles are released.

The immediate results after an adjustment by a chiropractor often include increased range of motion and pain relief. Continued care can result in long-term benefits, such as healing after a sports injury, enhanced brain performance, relief from allergies, and so much more. The nerves in your spine control your whole body. Like a finely tuned piano, if one key is pressed, it reverberates throughout the entire system.

There are several different methods of chiropractic care. All are non-invasive. Some involve a quick thrust to a specific area on the spine to force it into alignment. Others use movement to flex the spine. Decompression methods stretch the spine to allow fluids to flow between the discs. Your chiropractor will likely start with x-rays and an examination to pinpoint problem areas before treatments.

When the top bone in your neck, called the atlas, is misaligned, it can limit the ability of your brain to communicate

with your body; this is known as atlas subluxation complex (ASC). Thankfully, there is a chiropractic method that is specifically geared toward treating ASC. The NUCCA (National Upper Cervical Chiropractic Association) method uses x-rays and mathematical measurements to establish the precise misalignment pattern. Treatment is done with the Grostic technique, which is very gentle and precise. Not all chiropractors are skilled in the NUCCA procedure.

Because chiropractic care is gentle and non-surgical, it can be used to treat back pain in pregnant women. If you have ever been pregnant, you know this is great news! The baby’s weight forces your posture to change, which can cause significant pain, leading to trouble sleeping. Chiropractic care can solve these issues and help the pelvis adjust for the baby’s delivery.

There are no age restrictions for chiropractic care. The parents of some very young patients attest that it helps babies with colic, acid reflux, and other minor ailments. As of yet, no medical studies have proven this, but chiropractic care is certainly not harmful to infants or children. Children in sports can use chiropractic care to heal after a sports injury and to prevent future injuries.

Preventative care is under-rated; after all, most of us don’t think about seeing a doctor when we are well. When it comes to holistic health, though, chiropractors really shine. Their training includes nutrition and exercise. They can cure your back pain and headaches and prevent them from coming back.

Being healthy isn’t about a lack of illness. It is about enjoying life and feeling good. When we can carry bags of groceries up the stairs and into the house, we feel productive. When we can scoop up our children and grandchildren without pain, we feel young. When we can enjoy fun physical activities, we enjoy life. Gain all the benefits of whole-body health by speaking with a chiropractor. **WE**

Sources for this article included: webmd.com, nucca.org, healthline.com, and mayoclinic.org.

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