

#388 Frequently Asked Transcript

Frequently Asked Questions Brochure

Header: Frequently Asked Questions About Chiropractic

Photo: Man looking through magnifying glass

Subhead: ANSWERS INSIDE

Do I Have A Pinched Nerve?

Many patients consult a chiropractic doctor because they think they have a pinched nerve.

Because of the way your spine is designed, abnormal spinal function caused from physical trauma, emotional tensions, or chemical toxins can affect the delicate tissues of the spinal cord and nerve roots.

While commonly associated with the spine, the pinched nerve (compressive lesion) is actually rare. Researchers suggest that only 10% to 15% of spine related problems are caused by direct pressure of bone on nerve tissue! This can result in numbness, burning, or a "pins and needles" feeling.

More frequently, nerves are irritated (facilitative lesion). This is caused when nerve tissue is rubbed, scraped, stretched by a loss of spinal curve, or irritated by malfunctioning spinal joints.

Photo: Frayed rope

Caption: More common are nerves that are stretched, twisted, or irritated by spinal structures.

Do I Have A Slipped Disc?

Technically, a disc can't slip.

The intervertebral disc is a pad of cartilage-type material situated between spinal bones. Each disc serves as a connector, spacer, and shock absorber for the spine. A soft, jellylike center is contained by outer layers of fibrous tissue. Healthy discs help allow normal turning and bending.

Because of the way each disc is attached to the vertebrae above and below, a disc cannot "slip." However, trauma or injury to the spine can cause discs to tear, bulge, herniate, or worse, rupture. This can be quite painful, as the soft center of the disc leaks, putting pressure on the adjacent nerve roots and spinal cord.

While results cannot be guaranteed, many patients have avoided needless surgery or a dependency on pain pills, by choosing chiropractic care for their disc-related health problem.

Photo: Auto mechanic testing shock absorber

Caption: Discs do not "slip", however like the shock absorbers on your car, they can leak or rupture.

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, and 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.

Chiropractic is the science of locating offending spinal structures, the art of reducing their impact to the nervous system, and the philosophy of all things natural.

Photo: Dad and infant

Caption: Each of us is designed to be healthy. Chiropractic care helps restore optimum function.

How Does Chiropractic Work?

Chiropractic works by restoring your inborn ability to be healthy. When under the proper control of your nervous system, all the cells, tissues, and organs of your body are designed to resist disease and ill health. The chiropractic approach to better health is to locate and help remove interferences to your natural state of being healthy.

A common interference to the nervous system is the 24 moving bones of the spinal column. A loss of normal motion or position of these bones can irritate or impair the function of the nervous system. This can disrupt the transmission of controlling nerve impulses.

With improved spinal function there is often improved nervous system function. Your chiropractic doctor can help remove interference 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 of as "back" problems.

Photo: Doctor and patient looking at spinal model

Caption: Today's chiropractic doctor looks for the underlying nervous system involvements that can be the cause of many health problems.

What Do Chiropractic Doctors Do?

Helping to restore proper spinal biomechanics and improved nervous system function begins with a case history. This gives the doctor a background about your health, such as surgeries, accidents, the onset of your condition, and other details affecting your current health.

After reviewing your history and discussing your specific problem, a thorough orthopedic, neurological, and chiropractic examination is performed. X-rays may be taken to uncover structural and functional problems associated with the spinal column. These examinations help identify areas of spinal malfunction and resulting nervous system deficit.

The findings of these examinations are explained and a plan of chiropractic adjustments may be recommended. Progress is monitored with periodic examinations and follow-up reports.

Since the word "doctor" comes from the Latin word meaning teacher, regardless of your doctor's unique clinical approach, he or she has a strong commitment to patient education.

Photo: Doctor and patient looking at anatomical model

Caption: The word "doctor" comes from the Latin word meaning teacher.

What type of education do Chiropractic Doctors get?

Today's Doctor of Chiropractic is well educated.

The science of chiropractic requires a special emphasis on anatomy, physiology, pathology, neurology, biomechanics, X-ray, spinal adjusting techniques, and related subjects. This demanding curriculum prepares chiropractic doctors to locate the Vertebral Subluxation Complex and help correct the resulting nervous system dysfunction.

To graduate with a Doctor of Chiropractic degree, each candidate passes the demanding National Board Examination. Then, doctors apply to a governmental licensing board and pass a still more difficult test before being granted the privilege to practice.

A chiropractic education never ends. Most doctors complete post graduate instruction for license renewal and to stay current on the latest scientific research.

Photo: Student and instructor at microscope
Caption: After undergraduate studies, today's chiropractic doctor completes an additional four-year curriculum of over 4,500 college classroom hours of health sciences.

What Is An adjustment?

A chiropractic adjustment is the art of using a specific force in a precise direction, applied to a joint that is fixated, "locked up", or not moving properly. This adds motion to the joint, helping the bones gradually return to a more normal position and motion. The purpose of this safe and natural procedure is improved spinal function, improved nervous system function, and improved health.

There are many ways to adjust the spine.

Usually the doctor's hands or a specially designed instrument delivers a brief and highly-accurate thrust. Some adjusting methods are quick, whereas others require a slow and constant pressure.

After years of training and clinical experience, each chiropractic doctor becomes highly skilled in the delivery of a variety of adjusting approaches.

Photo: Posterior thoracic adjustment by hand
Caption: There are hundreds of ways to adjust the spine.

Are All Patients Adjusted The Same Way?

The doctor evaluates each patient's unique spinal problem and develops an individual course of care. The resulting recommendations are based upon years of training and experience.

Some patients who complain of headaches may actually have a lower back problem that is causing a compensation reaction at the base of the skull. Other patients may be experiencing numbness and tingling in their fingers, when the actual problem is in the neck. Every patient presents a uniquely different spinal pattern.

Patients notice that their chiropractic care is delivered with confidence and precision. Each visit builds on the one before. And while visits may seem similar, each patient's care is uniquely different from every other patient.

Photo: Family eating watermelon on dock
Caption: Regardless of the adjusting technique, chiropractic care is tailored to each patient's age, condition, and spinal problem.

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!

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.

Photo: Bungee cord jumper
Caption: Some people go to great lengths to adjust themselves, but you cannot effectively adjust yourself!

Is Chiropractic Care Safe?

In the words of the New Zealand government's inquiry, chiropractic care is "remarkably safe."

Chiropractic has an excellent safety record. It is the result of a conservative approach to health that avoids invasive procedures or addictive drugs.

A thorough case history and examination help reveal areas of the spine that may be causing nervous system malfunction. This information will be used to determine the best course of care for each patient.

Chiropractic care is a natural approach to better health that is proven safe and effective.

Photo: Patient face down receiving adjustment
Caption: Chiropractic care is safer than back surgery, muscle relaxers, and even common aspirin!

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 chiropractic doctor's recommendations for optimum results.

Photo: Middle-aged couple walking at dusk
Caption: Proper rest, exercise, and good nutrition are especially important during the healing process.

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.

Later, 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 can 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.

Photo: Three children in sports uniforms holding trophy

Caption: Chiropractic has been shown to be helpful with scoliosis and many other so-called "normal" childhood health problems.

Am I Too Old For Chiropractic Care?

More and more people are consulting chiropractic doctors, especially in their later years. With growing concerns about over-medication and the side effects of combining various prescription drugs, safe, natural chiropractic care is growing in popularity.

Restoring better spinal function can help improve mobility, vitality, endurance, and appetite. Many patients report improvement with arthritic symptoms and other chronic ailments often associated with the aging process.

The adjusting technique used by your doctor will be modified for maximum comfort and results.

As we get older and wiser, the simplicity and effectiveness of chiropractic care becomes more and more obvious.

Photo: Happy retirement age couple on patio chair

Caption: Regardless of your age, chiropractic care can help improve mobility and maintain vitality.

How Long Will I Need Chiropractic Care?

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.

How long you decide to benefit from chiropractic care is always up to you.

Photo: Young girl brushing her teeth

Caption: Periodic chiropractic checkups, like brushing and flossing, getting regular exercise, and eating wholesome foods is part of a healthy lifestyle.

(Back Panel)

Ask Your Chiropractic Doctor

Our office is committed to patient education.