



About Chiropractic Care

Fact:

Medicare has reimbursed chiropractic care since 1972.

Fiction:

It's a myth that chiropractic care has been proven to treat a wide range of conditions.

Many chiropractic techniques have not been evaluated scientifically, and many have not been adequately tested. You may wish to speak to your primary health care provider before beginning new therapeutic techniques, including chiropractic care. States differ in their rules for licensing professionals, so you may wish to choose a chiropractor who is licensed by a recognized national organization.

Understanding Chiropractic

Spinal manipulation has been practiced since ancient times. Modern chiropractic care is traced to David Daniel Palmer in the late 1800s. Early practitioners were challenged and even imprisoned, and a tension between MDs and chiropractors exists to this day. Medicare has reimbursed chiropractic care since 1972.

There are more than 60,000 licensed chiropractors in the U.S. Treatment emphasizes the relationship between the musculoskeletal structure (mostly the spine) and bodily function. Diagnostics include visual and physical exams and X-ray. Treatments typically last for 15 minutes to an hour and use many therapeutic techniques, including adjusting the spinal cord with hand pressure as well as twists and turns. Treatment may be supported with diet and exercise.

Is Chiropractic Care Effective?

Scientific studies in both animals and humans have shown that abnormal positioning of the spine can affect the nerves that come from the spine.

Studies have shown some benefits from treating tension headaches with chiropractic care. Although more research is needed, chiropractic care may improve whiplash injuries.

On the downside, chiropractic care may make low blood pressure worse and there are many published cases of neck manipulations increasing the chances of stroke, even among 20- to 60-year-olds. Treatments have been linked to spinal bleeding and blood clots. People with bone conditions such as osteoarthritis have reported fractures, and many other severe complications have been reported.*

Things to Consider

If you decide to see a chiropractor for a serious condition, don't postpone more conventional treatments.*

* IntelliHealth and Natural Standard, an organization that produces scientifically-based reviews of complementary and alternative medicine topics