

# Get Healthy and Pain Free with Chiropractic

Chiropractic is a health care profession that focuses on disorders of the musculoskeletal system and the nervous system, and the effects of these disorders on general health. Doctors of chiropractic—often referred to as DCs, chiropractors or chiropractic physicians—practice a drug-free, hands-on approach to health care that includes patient examination, diagnosis and treatment. In addition to their expertise in spinal manipulation/adjustment, doctors of chiropractic have broad diagnostic skills and are also trained to recommend therapeutic and rehabilitative exercises, as well as to provide nutritional, dietary and lifestyle counseling.

## What conditions do chiropractors treat?

Doctors of chiropractic care for patients of all ages, with a variety of health conditions. DCs are especially well known for their expertise in caring for patients with back pain, neck pain and headaches with their highly skilled manipulations, or chiropractic adjustments. They also care for patients with a wide range of injuries and disorders of the musculoskeletal system, involving the muscles, ligaments and joints. These painful conditions often involve or impact the nervous system, which can cause referred pain and dysfunction distant to the region of injury. The benefits of chiropractic care extend to general health issues, as well, since our body structure affects our overall function. DCs also counsel



patients on diet, nutrition, exercise, healthy habits, and occupational and lifestyle modification.

## How is a chiropractic adjustment performed?

Chiropractic adjustment or manipulation is a manual procedure that utilizes the highly refined skills developed during the doctor of chiropractic's intensive years of chiropractic education. The chiropractic physician typically uses his or her hands—or an instrument—to manipulate the joints of the body, particularly the spine, in order to restore or enhance joint function. This often helps resolve joint inflammation and reduces the patient's pain. Chiropractic manipulation is a highly controlled procedure that



rarely causes discomfort. The chiropractor adapts the procedure to meet the specific needs of each patient. Patients often note positive changes in their symptoms immediately following treatment.

## Research Supporting Chiropractic

A growing list of research studies and reviews demonstrate that the services provided by chiropractic physicians are both safe and effective. The evidence strongly supports the natural, whole-body and cost-effective approach of chiropractic care for a variety of conditions. To read excerpts from recent studies, visit [www.acatoday.org/chiroresearch](http://www.acatoday.org/chiroresearch).

## Chiropractic Education

Doctors of chiropractic—who are licensed to practice in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and in many nations around the world—undergo a rigorous education in the healing sciences, similar to that of medical doctors. Because of the hands-on nature of chiropractic, and the intricate adjusting techniques, a significant

## Why is there a popping sound when a joint is adjusted?

Adjustment (or manipulation) of a joint may result in the release of a gas bubble between the joints, which makes a popping sound. The same thing occurs when you “crack” your knuckles. The noise is caused by the change of pressure within the joint, which results in gas bubbles being released. There is usually minimal, if any, discomfort involved.

portion of time is spent in clinical training.

The course of study is approved by an accrediting agency which is fully recognized by the U.S. Department of Education.

This has been the case for more than 25 years. Before they are allowed to practice, doctors of chiropractic also must pass national board examinations and become state-licensed.



This extensive education prepares doctors of chiropractic to diagnose health care problems, treat the problems when they are within their scope of practice and refer patients to other health care practitioners

when appropriate. To learn more about how chiropractic education compares to medical education, visit [www.acatoday.org/chiroeducation](http://www.acatoday.org/chiroeducation).

### **Are the services provided by doctors of chiropractic safe?**

Chiropractic is widely recognized as one of the safest drug-free, non-invasive therapies available for the treatment of neuromusculoskeletal complaints. Although chiropractic has an excellent safety record, no health treatment is completely free of potential adverse effects. The risks associated with chiropractic, however, are very small. Many patients feel immediate relief following chiropractic treatment, but some may experience mild soreness or aching, just as they do after some forms

of exercise. Current literature shows that minor discomfort or soreness following spinal manipulation typically fades within 24 hours. Learn more at [www.acatoday.org/chirosafety](http://www.acatoday.org/chirosafety).

### **Is chiropractic treatment ongoing?**

The hands-on nature of the chiropractic treatment is essentially what requires patients to visit the chiropractor a number of times. To be treated by a chiropractor, a patient needs to be in his or her office. In contrast, a course of treatment from medical doctors often involves a pre-established plan that

is conducted at home (i.e. taking a course of antibiotics once a day for a couple of weeks). A chiropractor may provide acute, chronic, and/or preventive care thus making a certain number of visits sometimes

necessary. Your doctor of chiropractic should tell you upfront the extent of treatment recommended and how long you can expect it to last.



### **Is chiropractic treatment appropriate for children?**

Yes, children can benefit from chiropractic care. Children are very physically active and experience many types of falls and blows from activities of daily living as well as from participating in sports. Injuries such as these may cause many symptoms including back and neck pain, stiffness, soreness or discomfort. Chiropractic care is always adapted to the individual patient. It is a highly skilled treatment, and in the case of children, very gentle.

Information provided by the American Chiropractic Association.

To learn more about chiropractic, visit [www.acatoday.org/patients](http://www.acatoday.org/patients).

To find a doctor of chiropractic near you, visit [www.acatoday.org/findadoc](http://www.acatoday.org/findadoc).