

Chiropractic Medicine

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Chiropractic medicine is based on the relationship between the alignment of the spine and the function of the body, and how that relationship affects the preservation and restoration of health. Chiropractic dates back to the times of ancient Egypt. Modern Chiropractic medicine was founded in 1895 by Daniel David Palmer, based on his idea that all health problems could be prevented or treated using "adjustments" of the spine, and sometimes other joints, to correct what he termed "subluxations."

He proposed that subluxations were misaligned vertebrae which caused nerve compression that interfered with the transmission of what he named Innate Intelligence. This interference interrupted the proper flow of Innate Intelligence from "above, down, inside, and out" to the organ to which it traveled. As a result, the human body would experience "dis-ease" or disharmony which would result in loss of health. Chiropractors believe that subluxations, by disrupting normal neurological functioning, leads to stress held in the spinal system which must be released in order to remain healthy.

Chiropractors, also known as doctors of chiropractic or chiropractic physicians diagnose and treat patients whose health problems are associated with the body's muscular, nervous, and skeletal systems, especially the spine.

They believe that interference with these systems impairs the body's normal functions and lowers its resistance to disease. They believe most illnesses are due to blockages along the nerve bundles in the spinal cord. These blockages are found through physical examination and x-rays. Chiropractors use manipulative therapy as an integral treatment tool. With use of manual manipulation of the spine, chiropractors believe they can improve a person's health without surgery or medication.

Treatment may include lying on your stomach on a specially designed table, while the chiropractor uses his or her hands and elbows to realign the spine. Chiropractic treatments have proven to be effective in treating certain lower back pain, muscle and other bone pains. Some chiropractors also prescribe exercises to do at home.

The chiropractic approach to health care is holistic, stressing the patient's overall health and wellness. It recognizes that many factors affect health, including exercise, diet, rest, environment, and heredity. Chiropractors provide natural, drugless, non-surgical health solution to pain. They also recommend changes in lifestyle such as eating, exercise, and sleeping habits, to their patients. They take the patient's medical history; conduct physical, neurological, and orthopedic examinations; and may order laboratory tests. X rays and other diagnostic images are important tools because of the chiropractor's emphasis on the spine and its proper function.

Chiropractors also employ a postural and spinal analysis common to chiropractic diagnosis. In cases in which difficulties can be traced to the involvement of musculoskeletal structures, chiropractors manually adjust the spinal column. Some chiropractors use water, light, massage, ultrasound, electric, acupuncture, and heat therapy. They also may apply supports such as straps, tapes, and braces. Chiropractors counsel patients about wellness concepts such as nutrition, exercise, changes in lifestyle, and stress management.

Most patients who visit a chiropractor do so initially because of symptoms arising from musculoskeletal problems, especially low back and neck pain, although most chiropractors say they concern themselves with the overall health of the patient. According to a 2002 survey, chiropractic was the fourth most commonly used complementary and alternative medicine therapy among adults in the USA. (7.5%)

Patient's Guide

How do I use Chiropractic Medicine?

Chiropractic treatments can last from 15 minutes to an hour depending on what's done. You can find a chiropractor through many means, but referral is the best. As in any other professional specialty, chiropractors differ in their practice according to their unique orientation. Quite often, chiropractors recommend that a patient receive treatment 2-3 times a week, especially when a new injury is being treated. Many patients cannot afford to do such frequent treatment, and some chiropractors will be able to work with you on a more infrequent basis. Often, your chiropractor will also prescribe nutritional supplements and lifestyle changes.