



YOUR HEALTHY SPINE

Pain affects more and more people each year, resulting in reduced productivity in the workplace and an unhappy home life for thousands. It not only disturbs the person afflicted, but family, friends, and coworkers as well. It is often considered a disease. How is chronic pain dealt with in this country? Many people take medication, others undergo various surgeries, and countless sufferers just deal with it. More than just a nuisance, pain can cause the body to alter its function, and negatively affect the system over time. Pain can also cause depression, anxiety, and other psychological symptoms. Often, however, pain can be addressed quickly and simply without adverse reactions or side-effects, such as through gentle chiropractic care.

Most people have heard of chiropractic, but not everyone has experienced it. Is it safe? Is it effective? Why do I need it? These are common questions about natural health care. A study published in the Archives of Internal Medicine on October 11, 2004 reported many positive findings about chiropractic care. The researchers reviewed thousands of cases under a California insurance company. It found that chiropractic care cut the cost of treating back pain by 28%, reduced hospitalizations among back pain patients by 41%, decreased the number of back surgeries by 32%, and decreased the cost of diagnostic imaging (i.e. x-rays and MRIs) by 37%.

For those who have never experienced chiropractic, a Doctor of Chiropractic is trained in the structure, function and biomechanics of the human body, particularly the spine. The spine is divided into 24 moveable bones called vertebrae. These structures protect a vital part of the nervous system, the spinal cord, which manages thousands of bodily functions. Ironically, the spinal joints are often the underlying cause of pain, loss of movement and sensation when they are misplaced by various causes—a condition called “subluxation.”

Doctors of Chiropractic generally state that joint subluxations can cause disturbances such as stiffness and fixation, which alter proper movement. A subluxation affects an area locally, but may damage areas far removed from the site of complaint, such as the case in radiating, or traveling pain. It may or may not cause immediate awareness to the person affected, however, if not corrected, a subluxation can be devastating over time. Correction of a spinal misalignment by a Doctor of Chiropractic can not only decrease pain, it can promote joint healing and decrease spinal stiffness and muscle spasms.

At Simmons Family Chiropractic, Dr. Goldenberg utilizes several methods to reduce pain, increase function, and promote healing. For instance, the Erchonia Variable Percussor helps reduce joint adhesions and muscle spasms, and remove scar tissue that develops over time. It is a very effective tool to help patients increase their range of motion in restricted areas. Another device our office employs is the Erchonia Variable Adjustor. This is a handheld adjusting device that allows the doctor to restore motion to a misplaced joint without the use of forceful twisting or thrusting. Chiropractic tables are often engineered with mechanisms to help patients feel little or no pressure during an adjustment. Simmons Family Chiropractic uses the drop-table method to restore proper joint position, as well. Using the latest technology in diagnostic imaging, Dr. Goldenberg's on site digital x-ray machine is an excellent device in diagnosis when needed.

Chiropractic care can greatly improve the quality of life of individuals. From relieving pain conditions to promoting general health and wellbeing, it has shown great promise in people of all ages, from birth to later life. To exact the most benefit, a regular maintenance routine is recommended. Much like brushing your teeth daily to prevent cavities, and going to the dentist every 6 months for a check-up, seeing a chiropractor on a regular basis to prevent future injuries or painful situations will not only save your body, but money as well. Based on your personal health history and your body's reaction to chiropractic care, your doctor can recommend a specific and unique "maintenance" schedule for you. Some general guidelines to keep your spine healthy are in the following box (please check with your spinal care specialist to insure these are appropriate in your case). Remember—pain is important! It tells you that there is a problem that needs to be addressed. If you do not take care of the problem, it may go away temporarily, but most likely, it will become a much bigger issue if not fixed soon.

Spinal Care Tips

- Try to avoid sleeping with multiple pillows; this pushes the head too far forward or sideways and can cause ligament damage over time—try one soft pillow or a special cervical pillow
- Take frequent breaks while on the computer—set an alarm if you can't remember to get up once an hour to stretch and move about
- Actively roll your shoulders back and hold for 20 seconds. This will attempt to correct posture that occurs when slumping and letting your shoulders roll forward
- When driving long distances, try to take frequent breaks to move your legs and body; also make sure you have adequate lumbar support—put a rolled up towel about six inches above the hips to retain the proper curve in your lumbar spine if you do not have a lumbar supportive device
- Make sure shoes fit properly and are not excessively worn—this may change the biomechanics of the spine and extremities if not corrected promptly
- Stretch your spinal muscles regularly—ask your spinal care specialist to prescribe some stretches to keep you limber and mobile
- Strengthen your core—yoga, pilates, and other core stability exercises are important to maintain flexibility, strength, and mobility in the spine and joints—remember: the joints of the body *need* movement or they may eventually freeze