

WHAT IS CHIROPRACTIC? WHAT SHOULD I EXPECT AT ALLEGANY CHIROPRACTIC CENTER?

Chiropractic is a health care profession dedicated to the non-surgical treatment of disorders of the nervous system and/or musculoskeletal system. Generally, chiropractors maintain a unique focus on spinal manipulation, all joint manipulation and treatment of surrounding structures.

Many studies have concluded that manual therapies commonly used by chiropractors are generally effective for the treatment of lower back pain, as well as for treatment of **lumbar herniated disc** for radiculopathy and neck pain, among other conditions.

1. Patient History and Symptoms

In preparation for the chiropractic consultation, the patient will be asked to fill out forms that provide background information about his or her symptoms and condition. Types of questions typically include:

- When and how did the pain start?
- Where is it located?
- Describe the pain - is it sharp, dull, searing/burning, or throbbing? Does it come and go, or is it continual?
- Did the pain start as a result of an injury?
- What activities/circumstances makes it better or worse?

Patients are usually asked to provide information on family medical history, any pre-existing medical conditions or prior injuries, and previous and current health providers and treatments.

2. The Chiropractic Exam

A thorough **chiropractic exam** includes general tests such as blood pressure, pulse, respiration, and reflexes, as well as specific orthopedic and neurological tests to assess:

- Range of motion of the affected part
- Muscle tone
- Muscle strength
- Neurological integrity
- Xrays onsite if needed
- Lab test
- MRI if needed

Further chiropractic tests may be necessary to assess the affected area, such as having the patient move in a specific manner, posture analysis, or chiropractic manipulation of the affected body part.

There are well over 100 types of adjustment techniques used by chiropractors throughout the world. Typically, chiropractors will focus on and utilize 8 to 10 different approaches in their practice.

The common goal of most **chiropractic techniques** is to restore or to enhance joint function, with the general goals of resolving joint inflammation and reducing pain. Some approaches use some force (spinal manipulation), while others are more gentle (spinal mobilization).

- **Chiropractic Adjustment**

The original chiropractic adjustment approach is generally referred to as spinal manipulation, and may also be called the diversified technique or the **high-velocity, low-amplitude (HVLA) thrust**. New chiropractic adjustment approaches typically evolve as a variation from an existing technique and are often named after the chiropractor who developed it.

Chiropractic Manipulation Techniques

Chiropractors adapt treatment plans to meet the specific needs of each patient. Typically, **chiropractic treatment** plans involve some forceful and less forceful spinal adjustment techniques during the same visit or over the course of treatment (6 to 10 visits for a typical patient).

Spinal Manipulation (High-Velocity Low-Amplitude Thrust)

The most frequently used chiropractic technique, spinal manipulation, is the traditional high-velocity low-amplitude (HVLA) thrust. The manipulation often results in an audible "pop," as chiropractors use their hands to apply a controlled sudden force to a joint while the body is positioned in a specific way.

Spinal Mobilization (Low-Force or Gentle Chiropractic Techniques)

Some conditions (such as osteoporosis), pathology, the patient's size, patient comfort, or patient preference, may require a gentler approach generally referred to as spinal mobilization. In addition, some patients and/or clinicians prefer mild spinal mobilization techniques that do not involve twisting of the body or a forceful thrust.

In addition to manipulation, many chiropractors will employ adjunctive therapy, such as ice or heat or physical therapy modalities (such as **electric stimulation**, ultrasound, etc.), as part of an overall treatment plan. Patients should discuss their symptoms and preferences with their chiropractor, whose role it is to perform a thorough examination to determine the best course of treatment.

The focus on spinal adjustment is what makes doctors of chiropractic unique in their approach to treating patients with spinal complaints. The **chiropractic adjustment**, however, may not be the only procedure a chiropractor may employ in managing a patient's care. For example, chiropractic care has utilized drugless therapeutics (natural therapies) since as early as 1912.

Natural agents such as heat, cold, water, massage, light, and exercise are some of the physiological therapeutic measures that are often utilized by chiropractors. When controlled, these and other elements exert a beneficial influence on body functions and can help a number of common lower back pain problems.

Common Forms of Adjunctive Therapy

Some physiological therapeutic measures that are often utilized in chiropractic care include:

- **Heat and cold.** Chiropractors may alternate between **heat and ice therapy** to help patients treat back pain. Ice packs may be used to numb the back for a 10 to 15 minute period and

then switched with a heating pad, heat wrap or hot water bottle to restore blood flow to the area and promote faster healing.

- **Exercise.** Chiropractors may provide patients with instructions for an exercise program focusing on stretching and strengthening the back.
- **Massage.** Chiropractors may massage the soft tissues to improve circulation, reduce swelling and inflammation associated with the back pain, and encourage quicker healing..
- **Dietary management.** Many chiropractors will provide patients with tips on how an improved diet may help with their back pain, and some may recommend dietary supplements after spinal manipulation.
- **Ultrasound.** With ultrasound, sound waves create deep heat therapy that is applied to the soft tissues and joints. Basically micro-massaging the soft tissues and joints, ultrasound therapy can not only help reduce back pain, stiffness, and spasms, but increase blood flow and accelerate the healing process.
- **Diathermy.** A form of shortwave, electro-magnetic therapy that passes the softer tissues and provides heat to denser tissues, diathermy relaxes the muscles and connective tissues, decreases muscle spasms, and accelerates the healing process by increasing circulation. In chiropractic treatment utilizing diathermy, the treated area will typically feel pleasantly warm.
- **Hydrotherapy.** Using water and varying its temperature and pressure via hot baths, whirlpools, saunas or wraps, hydrotherapy focuses on the body's reaction to hot and cold stimuli. In chiropractic, hydrotherapy may be used to reduce the sensitivity of back pain through cold stimuli that numb the pain and the use of hot stimuli to promote blood flow and faster healing.
- **Electrical muscle stimulation.** During this chiropractic therapy, electrodes are placed on the skin that send light electrical pulses to different areas of the body with the purpose of reducing inflammation, curtailing muscle spasms and relieving back pain.
- **Transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulators (TENS).** The most common form of electrical stimulation, **TENS units** feature electrodes that are placed over the painful area with the user having the power to control the intensity of electrical stimulation. It is believed that TENS help block the transmission of pain signals along the nerves and also release the body's natural painkillers, endorphins.
- **Traction.** A chiropractic traction massage may include the patient lying face up as a system of rollers move about the back, all the while stretching and massaging the muscles in the back. Chiropractors may use other traction devices that stretch the spine, decompress the discs and reduce the pressure on the nerve roots (a procedure known as non-surgical **spinal decompression**).
- **Infrared radiation.** In chiropractic, a thermal camera may be used to image colored hues indicating the blood flow in the back. For example, red hues would indicate higher IR radiation and more blood flow in the back. Infrared radiation may be used by chiropractors to differentiate normal temperature changes from abnormal differences and to assess underlying conditions that are causing back pain.
- **Cold laser therapy.** With **cold laser therapy**, particles of energy are carried in a laser and absorbed by the cell membrane's photo receptors after penetrating the skin surface. The cells and tissues then convert this light energy into biochemical energy, fueling a biological process that is believed to decrease swelling, reduce back pain and inflammation, and improve circulation.
- **Ergonomics.** During the course of chiropractic care, the chiropractor may recommend some modification such as a work station change that is applied at home and/or at work. The success or failure of obtaining patient satisfying outcome may be directly related to applying an ergonomic/job-related modification or a hobby-related irritating activity.
- **Pelvic stabilization.** When leg-length deficiency, flat feet and/or subtalar instability are present, the chiropractor may place a small heel lift in the shoe on the short leg side and/or prescribe corrective arch supports to help stabilize the pelvis.

- **Patient education.** A chiropractor may advise a variety of lifestyle modifications, including diet and nutritional programs, self-care and coping strategies, to the patient experiencing lower back pain.

These methods may be utilized by the Allegany Chiropractic Center in the course of a patient's case management depending upon their specific needs.

The Allegany Chiropractic Center located at 203 Greene Street is taking new patients and is staffed by Dr. Audie G. Klingler DC and Dr. Teal L. Tritapoe DC. If you have any questions about your health please give us a call, the number is 3017770110.

Article submitted by Dr. Audie G Klingler owner of Allegany Chiropractic Center 2/6/17