



Chiropractic Care and Neck Pain

CAUSES OF NECK PAIN

Neck pain is a common problem with many possible causes. Poor posture, hunching over a computer, arthritis, whiplash, and muscle strain from simple things like reading in bed or grinding your teeth can all trigger neck pain. When your neck muscles become tired and strained, pain is usually the first symptom.

In rare cases, neck pain can be a sign of something serious. Seek immediate attention and tell your chiropractor if your neck pain is accompanied by severe headache, shooting pain in your shoulder or arm, numbness or loss of strength in your arms or hands, trouble speaking, swallowing or walking, blurred vision or loss of balance.



Did you know?

A Doctor of Chiropractic (DC) is highly trained to diagnose the causes of your neck pain and provide hands-on treatment that works. In fact, a recent international study on neck pain found that manual therapies such as adjustment and mobilization are among the few treatments that can help relieve neck pain¹.

If neck pain is affecting your ability to get through the day and keeping you away from your favorite activities, consider chiropractic care. A chiropractor will assess your symptoms, diagnose your condition, and recommend a treatment plan to put you on the road to recovery. Your chiropractor can also provide expert advice to help you prevent pain and injury from recurring.

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GETTING BACK IN ACTION

Chiropractic care can restore healthy function to your neck and the related muscles and ligaments to get you moving again. Chiropractors are specialists in adjustment of the vertebrae of the spine and other joints of the body. Adjustment helps relieve pain and restore normal movement – so you can enjoy your everyday activities again as quickly as possible. Complications are rare and side-effects such as temporary soreness are usually minor.

Chiropractors acquire their skills through an intensive four-year, full-time course of study after three years of university education.

PATIENTS PLAY A ROLE

The success of any treatment relies on patients playing an active role. Treating neck pain may require making changes to your work station, taking breaks to relax overworked muscles and joints, changing your pillow, and exercises to strengthen your neck and shoulders.

WHEN SHOULD I CONSIDER CHIROPRACTIC CARE?

If you experience neck pain, consult a chiropractor for an assessment. Your chiropractor will recommend a course of treatment specific to you which may include spinal adjustments, joint mobilization, muscle release techniques, muscle stimulation, and therapeutic exercises.

Most people respond well to treatment and get back to their regular activities faster than waiting it out.

EVIDENCE-BASED

Chiropractors are regulated health professionals and members of your health care team. Chiropractic care has been researched extensively. Your chiropractor is well-trained to determine if your problem will respond to chiropractic care or if you require referral to another health care professional.

LENGTH OF CARE

In some cases, treatment may begin on the first visit. Length of treatment will vary for each person, but many patients will begin to feel better after a few visits. People who have lived with prolonged neck pain or have degenerative problems will typically be in treatment longer. People may also choose periodic care to maintain healthy neck function.

A HEALING PARTNERSHIP

Your chiropractor will work with you to establish goals to measure your progress. Chiropractors are trained to prescribe therapeutic exercise, provide nutritional counselling and recommend rehabilitation and injury prevention strategies to help you participate in your care.

WHAT TO EXPECT ON A FIRST VISIT

If you are visiting a chiropractor for the first time, expect to provide a health history. This may include asking you about any illnesses, past surgeries, medications and other health issues. The chiropractor will ask you about your pain and conduct a physical examination to assess and diagnose the problem. Sometimes x-rays may be required.

Your chiropractor will explain the findings of the assessment to you and discuss the treatment recommendations, ensuring your consent to treatment is informed and your questions are answered.



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¹ *The Bone and Joint Decade Task Force on Neck Pain and Its Associated Disorders; published in the medical journal "Spine" February 15, 2008, Vol. 33, No. 4S.*