

## About Chiropractic Care

Chiropractors can help with more than just an achy back or a stiff neck. Patients suffering from headaches, migraines, TMJ (temporomandibular joint/jaw) disorder, ear pain or other painful conditions may also benefit from visiting a chiropractor. Many times, improving the function of the nervous system and musculoskeletal (bones and muscles) system relieves the pain and corrects the dysfunction or imbalance that was causing the pain.

Chiropractic offers a different perspective on health with the focus on treating the whole body while achieving and preserving overall wellness. Chiropractors use safe, effective treatments that do not involve drugs or surgery. Through manipulation of the spine as well as other therapeutic modalities, chiropractors help ease pain and restore function.

## A Chiropractor Can Find the Cause of Your Pain

Pain appears in different stages and can affect us all in different ways. Rather than just treating symptoms, chiropractors look for the root cause of your pain. They can provide strategies and treatments to first get you out of pain, and then improve mobility, flexibility, strength and function.

Chiropractors are trained to diagnose the cause and treat pain in all of its stages:

- **Acute** pain comes on suddenly and spikes quickly. Often, acute pain is the result of an injury, but it can also happen for an unknown reason.
- **Sub-acute** pain is less severe than acute pain and follows the acute stage of pain. Typically, sub-acute pain lasts from 4 weeks to 3 months.
- **Chronic** pain can have the same or different intensity as acute or sub-acute pain; we consider a painful condition to be chronic when the pain lasts longer than expected regarding healing time. Chronic pain is generally regarded as pain lasting longer than 3 months. It may be continuous or periodic.

# **Three stages of chiropractic care**

Which stage your care is in depends upon your body's current condition and how your body responds to treatment. Each of the stages have different physical and functional goals, and may have different treatments and therapies in each of these three stages. There is no set timeline for the different stages: Your progress will depend on the severity of any injury, your health prior to injury, your lifestyle habits and daily activities, and your body's response to treatment.

## **1. Acute Care (Relief)**

Acute care is the first stage of chiropractic care, and the goal in this phase is pain relief. If you have suffered an injury or are experiencing pain, your treatment at this stage will focus on alleviating your pain so you can resume daily activities. To do this, your chiropractor will work with you to decrease inflammation and improve the way your muscles and joints are functioning. In this stage, you may be asked to come into the clinic frequently at first, but visits will become less frequent as you progress. You can expect multiple treatment techniques to be used to manage your pain and begin to improve your range of motion.

How long your care is in the relief stage depends on how severe your injury is, how often you see your chiropractor and, once again, how your condition is responding to care. Don't be discouraged if your progress seems slow at first. Most problems don't develop overnight; rather, they often result from an accumulation of events, traumas and poor habits. Therefore, don't expect things to change overnight. The overall scope of care in this stage seeks to stabilize your condition so that the underlying cause of your symptoms can be addressed.

## **2. Corrective Care (Rehab)**

In the corrective care stage, you and your chiropractor will work together using techniques and exercises for repairing and re-training muscles and joints to move correctly. This phase of care may focus on rehabilitating poor muscle patterns and other underlying causes of the symptoms targeted by relief care. Your physical condition, age and lifestyle all influence which treatment methods will be used, and your chiropractor will make sure that you aren't experiencing pain or discomfort.

During this stage, your symptoms should be minimal, and you should feel that you can move and perform your everyday activities with little to no discomfort. You should be experiencing better pain-free ranges of motion. In this phase, you will continue with regular chiropractic visits, but the length of time between appointments will be longer than in the acute care stage.

### **3. Wellness Care (Retain)**

This last phase of chiropractic care is one in which you and your chiropractor will work to retain the progress you made in the first two stages of care. Wellness care, which is also sometimes called “maintenance” care, is focused on maintaining the results achieved and keeping you pain-free, moving and functioning as well as possible.

Much like regular visits to the dentist’s office are key to maintaining the health of your teeth even when you aren’t experiencing obvious dental problems, chiropractic maintenance care is key to keeping you in the best spinal health—and chiropractors can spot potential problems with the health of your spine before symptoms develop. Studies show that a chiropractic maintenance care regimen reduces disability over the long term. In this stage of care, your visits to the chiropractor are spaced out further than in the acute and corrective stages, and the time between visits depends on your activity level, lifestyle habits and, as always, how your body responds to chiropractic care.

Keep in mind that everyone has different pain and activity levels, as well as different types and severity of injury—and every individual responds differently to different types of chiropractic treatment. We take all of this information into consideration when creating a treatment plan with you. Our goal is to get you moving and feeling well as quickly as possible, so you can return to enjoying life!