

Q & A

What is Chiropractic?

“Chiropractic is a health care profession that focuses on disorders of the musculoskeletal system and the nervous system, and the effects of these disorders on general health. Chiropractic care is used most often to treat neuromusculoskeletal complaints, including but not limited to back pain, neck pain, pain in the joints of the arms or legs, and headaches. Doctors of Chiropractic – often referred to as chiropractors or chiropractic physicians – practice a drug-free, hands-on approach to health care that includes patient examination, diagnosis and treatment. Chiropractors have broad diagnostic skills and are also trained to recommend therapeutic and rehabilitative exercises, as well as to provide nutritional, dietary and lifestyle counseling. The most common therapeutic procedure performed by doctors of chiropractic is known as “spinal manipulation,” also called “chiropractic adjustment.” The purpose of manipulation is to restore joint mobility by manually applying a controlled force into joints that have become hypomobile – or restricted in their movement – as a result of a tissue injury. Tissue injury can be caused by a single traumatic event, such as improper lifting of a heavy object, or through repetitive stresses, such as sitting in an awkward position with poor spinal posture for an extended period of time. In either case, injured tissues undergo physical and chemical changes that can cause inflammation, pain, and diminished function for the sufferer. Manipulation, or adjustment of the affected joint and tissues, restores mobility, thereby alleviating pain and muscle tightness, and allowing tissues to heal. Chiropractic adjustment rarely causes discomfort. However, patients may sometimes experience mild soreness or aching following treatment (as with some forms of exercise) that usually resolves within 12 to 48 hours. In many cases, such as lower back pain, chiropractic care may be the primary method of treatment. When other medical conditions exist, chiropractic care may complement or support medical treatment by relieving the musculoskeletal aspects associated with the condition. Doctors of chiropractic may assess patients through clinical examination, laboratory testing, diagnostic imaging and other diagnostic interventions to determine when chiropractic treatment is appropriate or when it is not appropriate. Chiropractors will readily refer patients to the appropriate health care provider when chiropractic care is not suitable for the patient’s condition, or the condition warrants co-management in conjunction with other members of the health care team.” ACA

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Is Chiropractic Safe?

“Records from insurance and court cases have constantly shown that chiropractic is the safest portal of entry health care available to the public today. Although no healthcare procedures are 100% safe, chiropractic stands on its record of safety and effectiveness unmatched in healthcare. To learn more about the safety record of chiropractic please visit the website Chiropractic Is Safe at www.chiropracticissafe.org.” ICA

What is Whiplash?

“Whiplash—a soft tissue injury to the neck—is also called neck sprain or neck strain. It is characterized by a collection of symptoms that occur following damage to the neck, usually because of sudden extension and flexion. The disorder commonly occurs as the result of an automobile accident and may include injury to intervertebral joints, discs, and ligaments, cervical muscles, and nerve roots. Symptoms such as neck pain may be present directly after the injury or may be delayed for several days. In addition to neck pain, other symptoms may include neck stiffness, injuries to the muscles and ligaments (myofascial injuries), headache, dizziness, abnormal sensations such as burning or prickling (paresthesias), or shoulder or back pain. In addition, some people experience cognitive, somatic, or psychological conditions such as memory loss, concentration impairment, nervousness/irritability, sleep disturbances, fatigue, or depression.” – National Institute of Neurologic Disorders and Stroke: <http://www.ninds.nih.gov/disorders/whiplash/whiplash.htm>

What Treatment Should I Receive?

Treatment for individuals with whiplash will vary depending on risk factors, occupant kinematics during the crash (how your body moved), crash vector (where your car was hit), and your personal medical history. One definitive in the treatment process though, is that you should receive a multidisciplinary approach to care. This means that you should receive some form of pain management - medication, acupuncture, modalities (electrical stimulation, ultrasound, heat/ice), therapeutic exercises, therapeutic activities, and chiropractic care. Whiplash injures a number of different structures in your body in a variety of different areas. If you are not receiving care that helps improve joint motion (chiropractic), muscular strength (physiotherapy), and pain management (modalities, massage, acupuncture) you are only taking care of part of the problem. This in my experience will result in delay recovery and a high possibility of re-exacerbation of pain and dysfunction after release/discharge from care. Your body is not injured in one way; you should not be treated in one way. If you have questions about the care you are receiving contact us or get a second opinion from your doctor. - North American Spine Institute

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How do I know if the Treatment is Working?

Whiplash is a complex injury that has a variety of injury mechanisms. Thus, the time period for recovery not only depends on the clinician you choose to receive care from, but also the injury mechanism, crash vector, personal medical history, and risk factors associated with your case. Having said this in most cases patients should start to see remarkable improvements in 2-3 weeks of care. Most patients should see a 90-100% recovery in 4-8 weeks of care. These suggestions are on a typical whiplash patient. As mentioned above a variety of factors are involved in the injury mechanism which leads to a variety of treatment durations. If you have questions about the length of your care and if its appropriate contact us or get a second opinion from your doctor. - North American Spine Institute

Are all Doctors Trained in Whiplash Care? Does it matter where I Go for Treatment?

Only basic information is taught about whiplash in the graduate school setting (medical school, chiropractic school, osteopathic school, physical therapy school). Thus, in my opinion, it is important to seek care from a doctor that has received post graduate training in whiplash, whiplash injury mechanisms, and whiplash treatment methods. There are currently three organizations primarily teaching whiplash educational courses in North America. There may be other groups or doctors teaching whiplash courses, but this is usually one 12 hours basic course. The three primary organizations teaching whiplash currently are the North American Spine Institute (NASI), The Spine Research Institute of San Diego (SRISD), and the International Chiropractic Association- New Era in Spinal Trauma (ICA). The NASI and SRISD lists all of their graduates on their websites. If your healthcare provider has a certificate from one of these groups check the websites to confirm the amount of training he/she has received. The ICA currently does not list its attendees; however, a call can always be placed to the ICA to determine the extent of training your healthcare provider has. - North American Spine Institute

Whiplash Educational Organizations

North American Spine Institute: www.DrMazzarella.com

Spine Research Institute of San Diego: www.SRISD.com

International Chiropractic Association: www.chiropractic.org

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What is Mild Traumatic Brain Injury?

“Mild Traumatic Brain Injury (MTBI) is characterized by one or more of the following symptoms: a brief loss of consciousness, loss of memory immediately before or after the injury, any alteration in mental state at the time of the accident, or focal neurological deficits. Traumatic brain injury (TBI) can significantly affect many cognitive, physical, and psychological skills. Physical deficit can include ambulation, balance, coordination, fine motor skills, strength, and endurance. Cognitive deficits of language and communication, information processing, memory, and perceptual skills are common. Psychological status is also often altered. Brain injury can occur in many ways. Traumatic brain injuries typically result from accidents in which the head strikes an object. This is the most common type of traumatic brain injury. However, other brain injuries, such as those caused by insufficient oxygen, poisoning, or infection, can cause similar deficits.” – Center for Neuroskills: <http://www.neuroskills.com>

What Treatment Should I Receive?

“Because the effects of MTBI can be so diverse, no standard treatment exists. But physicians can take many actions to improve outcomes for patients with MTBI. Treatment outcome is dependent on the appropriate diagnosis of factors potentially responsible for persistent symptoms such as psychiatric problems and post-injury conditions.” – Center for Neuroskills: <http://www.neuroskills.com> Current research is also being conducted on the benefit of video games in the rehabilitation process, specifically the Nintendo Wii. When a brain injury occurs, that part of the brain decreases its function. One proposed method to rehabilitate this area is to increase the function of the injured area. It is theorized that the Wii and other balance, hand-eye, coordination, and think activities can help to stimulate the injured area, and thus rehabilitate it. - North American Spine Institute.

How Do I know if the Treatment Is Working?

If the treatment has potential to work you should eventually notice an improvement in balance, coordination, thinking, fine motor activities, or cognitive ability. However, there is no time frame for this to occur in. - North American Spine Institute

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What is Chronic Pain Management?

Chronic Pain Management is the process of providing medical care that alleviates or reduces pain. Pain management is an extremely important part of health care, as patients forced to remain in severe pain often become agitated and/or depressed and have poorer treatment outcomes. “In order for a structure to cause pain, it must have a nerve supply, be susceptible to injury, and stimulation of the structure should cause pain. The concept behind most interventional procedures for treating pain is that there is a specific structure in the body with nerves of sensation that is generating the pain. Pain management has a role in identifying the precise source of the problem and isolating the optimal treatment.” – MedicineNet.com: <http://www.medicinenet.com> Pain management can come in the form of medical care (medication, injections, surgery) or alternative care (chiropractic, acupuncture, massage therapy, physiotherapy). In my opinion, it is almost always better to try alternative care first, and if that does not help then look into medical care. If you are unsure about what type of care you should receive contact your doctor or call us today. - North American Spine Institute.

How Do I Manage my Chronic Pain?

“The American Chronic Pain Associations Ten Steps For Moving From Patient To Person.

STEP 1: Accept the Pain Learn all you can about your physical condition. Understand that there may be no current cure and accept that you will need to deal with the fact of pain in your life.

STEP 2: Get Involved Take an active role in your own recovery. Follow your doctor's advice and ask what you can do to move from a passive role into one of partnership in your own health care.

STEP 3: Learn to Set Priorities Look beyond your pain to the things that are important in your life. List the things that you would like to do. Setting priorities can help you find a starting point to lead you back into a more active life.

STEP 4: Set Realistic Goals We all walk before we run. Set goals that are within your power to accomplish or break a larger goal down into manageable steps. And take time to enjoy your successes.

STEP 5: Know Your Basic Rights We all have basic rights. Among these are the right to be treated with respect, to say no without guilt, to do less than humanly possible, to make mistakes, and to not need to justify your decisions, with words or pain.

STEP 6: Recognize Emotions Our bodies and minds are one. Emotions directly affect physical well being. By acknowledging and dealing with your feelings, you can reduce stress and decrease the pain you feel.

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STEP 7: Learn to Relax Pain increases in times of stress. Relaxation exercises are one way of reclaiming control of your body. Deep breathing, visualization, and other relaxation techniques can help you to better manage the pain you live with.

STEP 8: Exercise Most people with chronic pain fear exercise. But unused muscles feel more pain than toned flexible ones. With your doctor, identify a modest exercise program that you can do safely. As you build strength, your pain can decrease. You'll feel better about yourself, too.

STEP 9: See the Total Picture As you learn to set priorities, reach goals, assert your basic rights, deal with your feelings, relax, and regain control of your body, you will see that pain does not need to be the center of your life. You can choose to focus on your abilities, not your disabilities. You will grow stronger in your belief that you can live a normal life in spite of chronic pain.

STEP 10: Reach Out It is estimated that one person in three suffers with some form of chronic pain. Once you have begun to find ways to manage your chronic pain problem reach out and share what you know. Living with chronic pain is an ongoing learning experience. We all support and learn from each other.”

– The American Chronic Pain Society: <http://www.theacpa.org>