

FACT SHEET

What is Chiropractic?

What is Chiropractic?

- Chiropractic is the world's largest non-surgical, non-drug prescribing, primary contact health care profession.
- A natural approach to health, chiropractic focuses on the relationship between the spine and nervous system
- It is based on the scientific fact that the human body is a self-regulating, self healing organism. It works by restoring the inborn ability of the human body to be healthy.
- Chiropractic locates impairments of the nervous system known as 'vertebral subluxations'.

What is a vertebral subluxation?

- Vertebral subluxations are usually brought on by excessive stress on the spine through factors such as physical trauma (e.g. birth trauma, car accidents, falls) psychological stress and inadequate exercise.
- The primary focus of chiropractic care is the location, analysis, correction and prevention of vertebral subluxations.

How many people use chiropractic care?

- According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics National Health Survey 2004/2005ⁱ, which outlines national benchmarks on a wide range of health issues, 16% of people surveyed had recently (over a two week period) consulted a chiropractor. This equated to almost 433,000 visits in the two week survey period.

What training and qualifications does a chiropractic doctor receive?

- Australian Chiropractors study at university full-time for a minimum of five years, graduating with either a Bachelor's Degree in Chiropractic Science and Clinical Science, or a Bachelor Degree in Science and a Master's Degree.
- This intensive training prepares chiropractic doctors to adequately identify vertebral subluxations and help correct nervous system impairments with chiropractic adjustments.

What is an adjustment?

- A chiropractic adjustment is the art of using a specific force in a precise direction, applied to a joint that is "locked up", or not moving properly

-MORE-

- The purpose of this safe and natural procedure is to permit improved spinal and nervous system function, and overall health. There are many ways and techniques to adjust the spine
- Usually the doctor's hands or a specially designed instrument delivers a brief and highly-accurate adjustment. Some adjusting methods are quick, whereas others require a slow and constant pressure.

What are the benefits of chiropractic care?

Chiropractic can have a positive effect on a broad range of health conditions. Although a major benefit of chiropractic care, there is much more to chiropractic than the management of neck and back pain. Benefits include:

Relief of back and neck pain	Improved sleep quality
Headache relief	Pediatric benefits
Improved sports performance	Relief of functional disorders

Is chiropractic care safe?

- Chiropractic has an excellent safety record. It is the result of a conservative approach to health that avoids invasive procedures or addictive drugs. In relation to the treatment of neck and back pain, studies have shown that a course of chiropractic care was 250 times safer than a course of anti-inflammatory drugsⁱ.
- There are very rare risks of infrequent strain/injury to a ligament or disc in the neck (less than 1 in 139,000) or the low back (1 in 62,000) as a result of chiropractic care.
- 2008 researchⁱⁱⁱ in the journal *Spine* (conducted by the Bone and Joint Decade 2000-2010 Neck Pain Task Force) concerning the risk of vertebrobasilar artery (VBA) stroke found no evidence of excess risk of VBA stroke associated with chiropractic care. The researchers found that patients are no more likely to suffer a stroke following a visit to a chiropractor than they would after stepping into their family doctor's office.
- To put things into perspective, you have a greater chance of being injured in a car accident than from Chiropractic care. Chiropractors use skill, not force or strength to conduct safe, effective adjustments.

ⁱ Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2004-2005). *National Health Survey: Summary of Results*. (No. 4364.0). Canberra, Australian Capital Territory.

ⁱⁱ Dabbs, V., & Lauretti, W.J. (1995). A Risk Assessment of Cervical Manipulation vs NSAIDs for the Treatment of Neck Pain. *Journal of Manipulative and Physiological Therapeutics*, 18(8), 530-536.

ⁱⁱⁱ Cassidy, J.D., Boyle, E., Cote, P., He, Y., Hogg-Johnson, S., & Silver, F., & Bondy, S.J. (2008). Risk of vertebrobasilar stroke and chiropractic care: Results of a population-based case-control and case-crossover study. *Spine*, 33 (4S):S176-S183.