

# Seven Things You Must Know Before Going to a Chiropractor

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## Introduction

Depending on who you talk to, you'll probably get very different opinions on the topic of chiropractors.

On the one hand, some people swear by them, saying that chiropractors can greatly improve the quality of life and health for their patients. These are typically the people who have tried a few sessions for themselves and became regular users of a chiropractor's services.

Meanwhile, others believe that it's not "real medicine." They believe that chiropractic medicine is unsafe, unproven, and should be avoided.

So who is right? And even if you do decide to go, how do you make sure you're doing the right thing?

This short report will help answer a few of your questions, as well as some questions you may not have considered yet. First, we'll start by talking about the safety of chiropractic medicine.

## How Safe is Chiropractic Treatment?

This is by far the most common question asked by new patients. It's definitely a fair question, because your spine is extremely important to the health of your body.

To start, let's first discuss a few common fears regarding these treatments.

### **"I heard it can cause a stroke!"**

Some doctors and articles claim that chiropractic treatment has been shown to increase your chances of having a stroke. They say that this can happen when you have a high-velocity neck manipulation, a fairly common practice among chiropractors.

What the evidence says, however, proves that this is a false claim.

The event that is actually happening is a very rare form of stroke, during which an arterial injury occurs. Research indicates that this kind of injury can happen spontaneously to patients who have pre-existing arterial disease.

In other words- this type of stroke can suddenly happen whether you have chiropractic treatment or not.

Even though arterial injuries *may* be caused by high-velocity neck manipulations, the numbers point to this happening very rarely. With just 1-3 patients out of over 100,000, that makes the odds of this occurring roughly .001%.

### **"It's safer to just take pills, right?"**

Nope, not at all! Even though the pharmaceutical companies would like you to think their products are always safe, the numbers say otherwise.

For example, people taking NSAIDs are 3 times more likely to develop serious gastrointestinal problems such as a hemorrhage or perforation than those who do not. If you're over age 60, that risk rises to 5 times as likely.

Think pain killers are okay? Think again. The CDC says that pain killers are now one of the leading causes of accidental death in the United States.

Do you ever hear that about chiropractic treatments? I know I haven't!

## **“Can anything else happen, like a herniated disk?”**

To speak frankly- yes, there are rare cases of herniated disks and other complications after chiropractic treatments. This happens in a very small percentage of patients, but it can happen.

Unfortunately, there isn't a medical procedure in the world that is 100% safe and guaranteed to work without complications. But since chiropractic treatments are not invasive and don't require heavy medication, the risk is drastically reduced compared to conventional medicine.

## **Summary- is Chiropractic Treatment Safe or Not?**

Yes- chiropractic treatment is one of the safest treatments available for everything from back pain to energy and sinus issues.

There is a reason why so many patients who visit a chiropractor once fall in love with the treatments. They generally feel better, have more energy, and love that the amount of pain they were experiencing is reduced.

This isn't to say that something can't go wrong with you go see a chiropractor. However, you are generally in much better hands than if you decide to have an invasive surgery, followed up by a heavy dose of medication, and just pray that everything goes well!

## **Does a Chiropractor Have the Same Rules as a Doctor?**

In a word- yes. Chiropractors and their offices are held to very high standards regarding patient confidentiality, being available for their patients, etc.

In fact, the International Chiropractic Association (ICA) has a code of ethics that should be followed.

Here are a few of those rules, which are generally shared by doctors.

### **The Chiropractor Will Not Discuss Patient Information with Another Patient**

This might seem like common sense, but you might be surprised. Sometimes it can be easy for a doctor or chiropractor to say “I have this one patient, Joe Smith, who had the same problem as you, and ...”

So as you can see, it’s not blatantly trying to share information about a patient, but it can happen on accident.

Still, it is information that shouldn’t be shared, so the ICA looks down on it.

### **Patient Information Cannot be Given to Family or Friends without Consent from the Patient- Preferably in Writing**

The primary reason for this is to protect the patient. For the most part, family and friends do not need this kind of medical information. By hiding it, the chiropractor is able to protect their patient from multiple things- both intentional and accidental.

The reason why written consent is preferred is because it cannot be argued. A voice or video recording can also work well.

### **Discussion of Patients between Professionals Shall be Done Privately**

Sometimes doctors and chiropractors will discuss a patient’s condition, possible remedies to their condition, and other similar issues. These should not be done in front of the patient, family and friends, or even in front of other office employees.

### **Patient Information Protection from the Chiropractor’s Family/Friends**

Do you ever talk about your work when you get home? Just about everyone does, but chiropractors have to be especially careful about what they say.

Even if they don't mention a specific name, just talking about a case is generally a bad idea- you never know what your family can figure out if you drop enough information on accident.

## **More Similarities between Chiropractors' and Doctors' Rules**

There are other rules regarding patient information as well, including what you can say on the phone, to news media, and visitors to the chiropractor's office.

In addition to what can/can't be said, chiropractors have other rules to follow that are similar to those of doctors.

For example, medical records of a patient cannot be released without the written consent of the patient. These records require the utmost confidentiality, and cannot even be shared with family or friends without consent.

Even if a patient does offer consent, certain procedures must be followed. These procedures and guidelines are outlined by the American Medical Records Association (ARMA).

Finally, the last example is the patient's Bill of Rights. Similar to those of doctors, a patients' Bill of Rights explains the authority they have to take, accept and refuse certain actions.

## **To Wrap it Up...**

Chiropractors have a large number of rules to follow, just as doctors do. Because they are both in the medical industry, the two sets of rules have more similarities than differences.

# Determining When You Need to See a Chiropractor

Chiropractors perform a number of different functions. They're trained to heal with holistic methods, including diet, exercise, as well as what you may typically think of (such as "cracking" your back).

Even though most people think that chiropractors just help with back pain, there are a lot of other things that they can help you with. Here are just a few signs that you should consider going to a chiropractor.

## Excessive Muscle, Head or Joint Pain

Everything in your body is connected. Even if it doesn't physically touch, a problem in your spine can cause you to have headaches, for example. You may also experience very stiff shoulders or aching muscles for apparently no reason.

If you are constantly having these types of pains- and nothing seems to help- consider seeing a chiropractor.

## You Sit Down Most of the Time

Tens of millions of Americans sit down the majority of the time. Between 8 hours at work, then 1-2 hours at night surfing the web, and another few hours on TV- we spend WAY too much time sitting down.

What most people don't realize is that our bodies aren't meant to sit this much! A chiropractor can help relieve any misalignment that sitting may be causing to your back or posture.

## Previous Injuries Didn't Heal Completely

People break bones and pull muscles every single day. These can be very serious injuries, and require professional attention to make sure that they heal properly.

If an injury doesn't seem to have healed completely, see a chiropractor to get it fixed up.

## Shooting Pain in Your Legs

When you run, does pain shoot from your hips down your legs to your feet?

Many people don't think of this as a chiropractor's area of expertise, but they can certainly help. Especially if the pain is shooting *down*, not up.

## **Dull Pain, Stiffness and Achiness**

Again, this isn't just about back pain. A good chiropractor can help smooth out tight muscles and realign bones to reduce stiffness, headaches and pain.

## **You Want to Avoid Drugs or Surgery**

Even though some doctors would disagree, the fact of the matter is that there are alternatives to these dangerous methods. Chiropractic care is one of them.

## **Posture**

Poor posture sometimes comes from sitting down all day, but there are other causes as well. Either way, a chiropractor may be able to help if you hunch over, or even if your head is a little forward instead of directly over the shoulders.

## **One Leg or Arm Seems Longer than the Other**

Even though you may have very minute differences between the 2, sometimes a poor muscle or bone alignment can cause a significant difference. If clothes seem to fit differently on one side or the other, or maybe your shoes don't wear out evenly, it's time to see a chiropractor.



## How Much Should I Expect to Pay?

Generally- it depends.

I hate to say that about so many subjects, but it's the truth- not just with chiropractic treatment, but life as a whole.

Still, there are a few things you can expect:

### The First Visit

You can expect either one of 2 things the first time you go:

- 1) Your visit is free, as it's more of a consultation than a treatment session, or
- 2) Your visit *isn't* free, and it costs about \$10 more than what you'd pay for later visits

Chiropractors who offer the free consultation do so to help bring in more potential customers. They know that a lot of the people won't accept treatment, so don't feel bad if you don't think they're right for you.

Meanwhile, others will have you pay the regular cost as well as the fee to cover administration. As you'd expect, this fee includes a consultation and treatment.

So now it's just a matter of the "regular" cost.

### What to Expect to Pay for Most Treatments

Depending on where you live, the experience of the chiropractor and a number of other factors- expect to pay anywhere from \$35 to \$100 (or more) per visit.

If you set up a recurring plan with your chiropractor you may be able to negotiate a lower price, but this is the standard of what a visit will cost.

Keep in mind that these treatments can be seen as the alternative to a very costly surgery. Surgery not only includes the cost of the surgeon's time, but also time spent in the hospital for recovery, nurse/assistants time, special equipment used, etc.

So even though it's not extremely inexpensive to see a chiropractor, it's *much*, much less expensive than the alternative and you get fast results that don't require hospitalization or drug therapy.

# How to Find the Right Chiropractor for Your Situation

Selecting a great chiropractor can make or break your overall experience. Here's a 3 step process to help you identify the best one for you:

- 1) Ask for Referrals
- 2) Conduct Background Research
- 3) Interview the Best Candidates

Let's start by talking about referrals.

## Asking for a Recommended Chiropractor

The very first place to start is your physical therapist, doctor, or even a spine specialist. These folks work with chiropractors and other professionals all the time, so they should be able to give you good recommendations.

The second place to ask around is friends and family. Even though most people won't know a chiropractor, doubtless you'll know a few people who required chiropractic treatment before.

After asking around a bit, see if any trends showed up. For example, if one or two chiropractors were recommended by multiple people, they may be a great place to start.

## Do Your Research

Even though referrals are great, a little more homework never hurt anyone. We recommend that you check out the chiropractor's background.

The best way to do this is through your state's Chiropractic Registration and Licensing Board. If for some reason you have trouble getting in touch with them, another option is to see if the chiropractor's college is accredited by the Council on Chiropractic Education.

Finally- check out good ol' Google, or a site like Angie's List. These types of tools are great for finding out what previous customers think of doctors, chiropractors, lawyers, etc.

But there's one more step before you make a choice- the interview.

## The Interview with the Chiropractor

Interviews, whether over the phone or in-person, are a great way to get to know a chiropractor.

You'll be able to ask any question you want, and hopefully the chiropractor can help ease your mind about any questions you have.

Another benefit is that you'll get a feel for the personality of the person. Are they kind and friendly, or more of the "strictly business" type?

Or maybe they fall somewhere in between.

Either way- chances are you will have a better experience with the chiropractor if you feel comfortable with them. If you feel intimidated or like you can't share anything with them, they can't treat you as well.

We'll give you a few good questions to ask later in this report, so don't worry about that. Just make sure that while you're asking the questions, listen for 2 things- what the chiropractor actually says, and *how* they say it.

Chances are- if they've been recommended multiple times, pass the background check, and seem like someone you'd be comfortable with- they're a great candidate to choose for your chiropractic treatment.

## **What to Watch Out For**

Here's a quick list of stuff to watch out for while doing your research and interviews.

### **Supplement/Diet Promotion**

Some chiropractors sell certain supplements in their offices. These are usually "Private Label Rights" products that the chiropractor simply added their own logo to.

Other times, it might be a certain MLM company, such as Amway, that they promote. Either way- stick with registered dieticians for this kind of stuff- not a chiropractor.

### **"It's a Miracle!"**

Some chiropractors will claim that they (or "someone they know") have cured disease through chiropractic treatment.

If you hear something like this, run for the hills. Yes, chiropractic treatment can help remove or reduce pain and discomfort- but it isn't going to cure cancer.

Likewise- if a chiropractor tells you that this kind of treatment can prevent all health problems... that are a bad sign.

### **"Nah, There's No Risk"**

Even though the risks associated with chiropractic treatment are low, they *do* exist. But some chiropractors will tell you there's absolutely zero risk, just to drum up your business.

Likewise, some will specifically advocate certain higher-risk procedures such as neck manipulation. Even though these methods aren't extremely high-risk, a chiropractor who completely swears by it, or even uses scare tactics into agreeing to it, probably isn't someone to keep seeing for treatment.

# What to Expect at Your First Office Visit

First off, we should be clear that every chiropractor's personality and office will be different.

That said, there are a few standard things to expect on your very first visit:

- 1) Patient's History and Symptoms
- 2) Examination
- 3) Diagnostic Studies (maybe)
- 4) Final Diagnosis

Let's start with the history and symptoms.

## “What Hurts?”

Chances are, you're going to see a chiropractor because you're in some kind of pain, right?

Maybe it's a dull ache in your back, or your shoulders are always stiff.

Either way- the chiropractor can't help you if you don't tell them what's going on. You'll have to explain not what you're feeling, but how long it's been like this, what may have caused it, etc.

Keep in mind that chiropractors use the holistic approach, so they don't *just* want to know about your stiff shoulder. If you have shooting pain in your legs, or you find yourself hunching over 90% of the time, explain those issues as well.

The more thorough you are, the more easily the chiropractor can find the root of the issue.

## “Let's Take a Look”

With the examination, the chiropractor will perform a few standard exams (such as blood pressure and heart rate), as well as more specific tests. These tests may include your flexibility, the straightness of your spine and muscle strength.

The depth of this examination typically depends on if you're paying for the first visit or if it's a free consultation. If you are putting money down, expect to run a few more tests so the doctor can properly begin treatment.

## Diagnostic Studies

Sometimes the chiropractor may not have enough information to complete your diagnosis without more in-depth testing.

A few diagnostic studies that they may complete are X-Rays or MRIs.

(Note that most chiropractors don't have MRI capabilities, so they'll prescribe you to a clinic or hospital that does.)

Once these tests are done, the chiropractor can give you a final diagnosis.

## **The Finale**

At the end of the visit, the chiropractor will explain what they think the issue is, how they can treat it, how long it will take, and how much it (should) cost.

This is essentially a customized treatment plan for you, which may be anywhere from a few weeks to a few months of treatment.

Make sure to ask any and all questions you can think of regarding this plan. You don't want to miss an important detail or make large assumptions.

Instead, make sure you understand what it says, *make sure it's in writing*, and then ask for time to make the decision on moving forward with it or not.

## **Other Important Questions to Ask**

Here are just a few important questions to ask your chiropractor before you start receiving treatment.

Keep in mind that this isn't a complete list, but it will help you get started.

**“How long have you been in business?”**

**“Do you have any referrals I could speak with?”**

**“Have you treated patients with conditions similar to mine?”**

**“What kinds of treatments do you practice and recommend most often?”**

**“Do you use your hands or an instrument for chiropractic manipulation?”**

**“How much training and practice do you have with the specific techniques you recommend for me?”**

**“Do you use lighter, low-force adjustments or deeper, joint-popping ones?”**

**“What other services, such as massage therapy or exercise instruction, do you offer?”**

**“What do you recommend if the treatment plan doesn't seem to help after a few weeks?”**

**(If an X-Ray is recommended) “Why do I need an X-Ray? How will it help with my diagnosis?”**

**“Do you take \_\_\_\_ (Your) Insurance?”**

**“Do you offer any discounts, such as a cash-payment discount?”**

**“Do you offer any kind of guarantee?”**

Again - there are dozens of other very good questions to ask. These should definitely help get you started though, and may help you think of questions you otherwise wouldn't have considered.





## Conclusion

Selecting a chiropractor can be a stressful time. Especially since everyone has their own opinion on the safety and effectiveness of chiropractic treatment these days.

The thing is- millions of people experience less pain and stiffness thanks to chiropractic treatment. Even if they don't see it as a complete miracle, they're thankful that they were able to have pain removed without invasive surgery or dangerous drugs.

Before choosing a chiropractor, make sure you do your due diligence. Don't just go with the first one you come across, but neither should you be afraid to work with one that seems to be a great candidate.

Any top-notch chiropractor will be more than willing to answer your questions, as well as develop a customized treatment plan to fit your needs and budget.

Thanks for reading, and please let us know if there's anything else we can do for you regarding chiropractic treatment.

Sincerely,

Your Name