



BACK PAIN

How To Choose A Chiropractor

Finding a good one is easier than you may think...



You've just moved into town, or you are visiting a friend or family member and you need your low back fixed from carrying all that luggage.

Where do you go to find a good chiropractor in the neighborhood? A

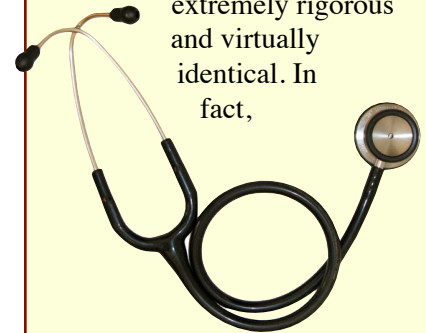
big ad doesn't always mean good service.

We've put together some questions for you to ask any clinic in your neighborhood that will help you solve that dilemma, and focus on getting better.

Myth #1 - Chiropractors are Not Real Doctors

A chiropractic college grants a D.C. or Doctorate of Chiropractic degree. Chiropractors are licensed as health care providers in every U.S. state and dozens of countries around the world. While the competition for acceptance in chiropractic school is not as fierce as medical school, the chiropractic and medical

school curricula are extremely rigorous and virtually identical. In fact,



chiropractors have more hours of classroom education than their medical counterparts. As part of their

HOW TO CHOOSE A CHIROPRACTIC PHYSICIAN

The American Chiropractic Association explains that Doctors of Chiropractic are physicians who treat the human as a whole. They hold that the relationship between the human body's structure and function are significant to health, most specifically the relationships



between the spinal column and the nervous system. Chiropractors employ practices and procedures based on academic and clinical training received in accredited chiropractic colleges. These practices include, but are not limited to, adjustment and manipulation of the human body,



particularly of the spinal column.

Varied Philosophies

However, finding a good chiropractor can be quite difficult since there is an unusually large variety of practice philosophies and techniques throughout the profession. Drs. Dressen and Gilmore of Back To Action Chiropractic, explain that some chiropractors treat for quick pain relief while others are more focused on rehabilitation and overall well ness. Additionally, chiropractors have different styles of treatment. Some will adjust using their hands while others employ the use of specialized instruments. Also some chiropractors prefer to manipulate deeper while others have a lighter touch. These are very individual preferences by both the doctor and the patient.

Get Recommendations

rof Chiropractors who are interested in a patient's overall health will offer supplemental advice on diet, exercise and lifestyle to improve, but not cure, a chronic ailment.

To begin to select a chiropractor, start by asking friends or co-workers for recommendations.

Chiropractors who are favored, and those present and active in the community will emerge as

names you'll hear repeatedly. These will be your most promising candidates. As with any health care provider, you should trust and feel comfortable with your chiropractor. Knowing that they are highly thought of among your community can be an important element in building that trust.

First Appointment

Once you have gathered a list of potential chiropractors, arrange for an introductory appointment during which you can explore the chiropractor's attitudes and practice patterns.

During your appointment, you will want to learn about how the office invests in new technology. Medical fields are constantly improving their diagnostic tools. An office that invests in its technology is interested in being at the apex of their field. For example, Drs. Dressen and Gilmore's office uses a high frequency x-ray that can fully examine your situation while minimizing your exposure to radiation, along with surface electromyography and thermography to help him put together a treatment plan that works best for his patients.

Other questions you may wish to ask at your first appointment:

- How long has he/she been in the profession?

As part of their education, chiropractic students also complete a residency working with real patients in a clinical setting, supervised by licensed doctors of chiropractic. Once chiropractic students graduate, they have to pass four sets of national board exams as well as state board exams in the states where they want to practice.

Just like medical doctors, chiropractors are professionals that are subject to the same type of testing procedures, licensing and monitoring by state and national peer-reviewed boards. Federal and state programs, such as Medicare, Medicaid, and Workers' Compensations programs cover chiropractic care, and all federal agencies accept sick-leave certificates signed by doctors of chiropractic. Chiropractors are also commissioned as officers in the military.

The biggest difference between chiropractors and medical doctors lies not in their level of education, but in their preferred method of caring for people. Medical doctors are trained in the use of medicines (chemicals that affect your internal biochemistry) and surgery. Consequently, if you have a chemical problem, such as diabetes, hypothyroidism, or an infection, medical doctors can be very helpful. However, if your problem is that your spine is misaligned or you have soft tissue damage causing pain, there is no chemical in existence that



• Does he/she belong to any professional organizations?

• Location? Office Hours?

• Cost? Will your insurance work with him/her?

• Will the office file with your insurance, or will you need to do that?

Be wary if any practitioner claims to be the only one with a "special new technique" that no other chiropractor can use. Also, if after the first visit, the chiropractor claims to be able to "cure" a condition such as diabetes, cancer, or other long-term, chronic condition, another choice may be appropriate.

• What is the full range of services offered? Some chiropractors offer massage, exercise instruction, rehabilitation, strength training, and nutritional counseling as part of an overall wellness approach.

After the Appointment

After your visit consider if these essential questions were answered:

- What is the cause of my discomfort?
- Can chiropractic treatment help me?

- How long will treatment help me?
- How much will treatment cost?

In addition, consider whether he listened to you and whether he explained his practice to your satisfaction.

Often, experienced chiropractors have a conservative attitude toward the treatment of back pain and other musculoskeletal problems.

Typically, within one to four weeks, pain should be reduced by 40-80%, and the frequency of visits should decrease as the patient's function improves.

Finally, your chiropractor should be **someone you trust to provide spinal care for you and your family for years to come.** This should include offering advice on how to avoid future problems by implementing an exercise, diet and healthy lifestyle plan.

MORE CHIROPRACTIC MYTHS:

MYTH #2: MEDICAL DOCTORS DON'T LIKE CHIROPRACTORS

The American Medical Association's opposition to chiropractic was at its strongest in the 1940s under the leadership of Morris Fishbein. Fishbein called chiropractors "rabid dogs" and referred to them as "playful

can fix it. You need a physical solution to correct a physical problem. That is where chiropractic really shines. Chiropractors provide physical solutions -- adjustments, exercises, stretches, muscle therapy -- to help the body heal from conditions that are physical in origin, such as back pain, muscle spasms, headaches, and poor posture. Another distinction is the fact that it is completely appropriate to receive chiropractic care even if you do not have symptoms. Unlike standard medical doctors, whom you visit when you have a symptom to be treated, chiropractors offer adjustments to improve spinal alignment and overall well-being before symptoms develop.

and cute, but killers" He tried to portray chiropractors as members of an unscientific cult who cared about nothing but taking their patients' money. Up to the late 1970s and early 1980s, the medical establishment purposely conspired to try to destroy the profession of chiropractic. In fact, a landmark lawsuit in the Supreme Court of Illinois in the 1980s found that the American Medical Association was guilty of conspiracy and was ordered to pay restitution to the chiropractic profession.

In the 20 years since, the opinion of most medical doctors has changed: several major studies have shown the superiority of chiropractic in helping people



with a host of conditions, and medical doctors developed a better understanding as to what chiropractors actually do. Many people have returned to their medical doctors and told them about the great results they experienced at their chiropractors office. Hospitals across the country now have chiropractors on staff, and many chiropractic offices have medical doctors on staff. Chiropractors and medical doctors are now much more comfortable working together in cases where medical care is necessary as an adjunct to chiropractic care.

MYTH #3: ONCE YOU START GOING TO A CHIROPRACTOR, YOU HAVE TO KEEP GOING...

This statement comes up frequently when the topic of chiropractic is discussed. It is only partially true. You only have to continue going to the chiropractor as long as you wish to maintain the health of your neuromusculoskeletal system.

Going to a chiropractor is much like going to the dentist, exercising at a gym, or eating a healthy diet: As long as you keep it up, you continue to enjoy the benefits.

Many years ago, dentists convinced everyone that the best time to go to the dentist is before your teeth hurt, that routine dental care will help your teeth remain healthy for a long time. The same is true of chiropractic care for your spine. It is important to remember that, just like your teeth, your spine experiences normal wear and tear as you walk, drive, sit, lift, sleep, and bend. Routine chiropractic care can help you feel better, move with more freedom, and stay healthier throughout your lifetime. Although you can enjoy the benefits of chiropractic care even if you receive care for a short time, the real benefits come into play when you make chiropractic care a part of your wellness lifestyle.



Contributors

DR. JERRY DREESEN



Dr. Dreesen is from Lynnwood WA and has been in active practice for over 20 years.



DR. JASON GILMORE
Playing hockey and growing up in Manitoba, Canada, Dr. Gilmore brings a vast knowledge of sports injury techniques guaranteed to get you back in the game quickly.

COMPLIMENTS OF:
Back To Action Chiropractic
www.backtoaction.com