



## Patient Resources

### Chiropractic

Chiropractic is a form of health care that focuses on the relationship between the body's structure and its functioning. Doctors of chiropractic must complete four years of specialized training at an accredited chiropractic college in addition to undergraduate work before they can be licensed to practice.

People often associate chiropractic with the “cracking” of the back and neck, which is a form of spinal manipulation. There are, however, other techniques used in chiropractic such as:

- *Ultrasound therapy* applies soundwaves to soft tissues and joints that can have a similar effect to massage, reducing swelling and decreasing both pain and stiffness.
- *Trigger-point therapy* applies gentle pressure to a specific area of muscle where a patient experiences pain to alleviate the pain.
- *Low-level laser therapy* uses a non-heat-producing laser that penetrates deep tissue, and may reduce inflammation.
- *Therapeutic exercises and stretches* designed to promote strength and endurance.



### Who is it for?

Some individuals find that chiropractic is very beneficial in providing pain relief, whereas others are wary of the potential risks. Spinal manipulation may be beneficial for individuals with early osteoarthritis and early ankylosing spondylitis (AS), however, individuals with AS that have advanced to the point of fused joints and individuals with osteoporosis should avoid chiropractic as manipulations can cause fractures. Individuals with arthritis, especially rheumatoid arthritis, and those experiencing active swollen joints should use caution when considering chiropractic as spinal manipulation can worsen their symptoms. *It is important that individuals with arthritis discuss their interest in chiropractic with their rheumatologist to ensure that it is a safe option.*

### Does it work?

Many of the studies in chiropractic focus on the manipulation of the spine, and although some have specifically focused on the uses of manipulation with conditions such as fibromyalgia and carpal tunnel, most of the research focuses on low-back pain. There is scientific evidence to show that individuals with low-back pain may benefit from chiropractic care.

### Before you make your appointment...

- Discuss your interest in chiropractic care with your rheumatologist to ensure that it is a safe option for you.
- Look for a reputable chiropractor that has experience with arthritis and approaches issues with a combination of chiropractic, physical therapy and neuromuscular treatments.
- Inform the chiropractor of your condition and what you are hoping to accomplish through chiropractic.

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