

## Quick Facts MassChiro

MassChiro is the state's premier resource for Chiropractic and health information (<http://www.masschiro.org>)

MassChiro (also known as the Massachusetts Chiropractic Society) is the non-profit professional service organization dedicated to the advancement of the chiropractic profession and the well-being of the Massachusetts health-care consumer.

- Chiropractic is a natural method of health care with the proven ability to relieve back and neck pain, increase vitality, and promote well-being
- Chiropractic care is a non-surgical, drug-free approach to health and is among the safest of all health care practices.
- Healthcare consumers are discovering chiropractic care not only for the relief of back and neck pain but for preventive measures as well.
- People are turning to chiropractic for Wellness care and sports performance enhancement.

Visit our online press room at <http://www.masschiro.org/media>. MassChiro can be a great resource for you to turn to for any upcoming stories you may be working on from backpack safety, ways to keep your back healthy, tips for shoveling in the upcoming winter months and preventative care for athletes, kids and the elderly.

## Back Pain Facts & Statistics

Although chiropractors care for more than just back pain, many patients visit chiropractors looking for relief from this pervasive condition. In fact, 31 million Americans experience low-back pain at any given time.<sup>1</sup>

### A few interesting facts about back pain:

- One-half of all working Americans admit to having back pain symptoms each year.<sup>2</sup>
- Back pain is one of the most common reasons for missed work. In fact, back pain is the second most common reason for visits to the doctor's office, outnumbered only by upper-respiratory infections.
- Most cases of back pain are mechanical or non-organic—meaning they are not caused by serious conditions, such as inflammatory arthritis, infection, fracture or cancer.
- Americans spend at least \$50 billion each year on back pain—and that's just for the more easily identified costs.<sup>3</sup>
- Experts estimate that as many as 80% of the population will experience a back problem at some time in our lives.<sup>4</sup>

### What Causes Back Pain?

The back is a complicated structure of bones, joints, ligaments and muscles. You can sprain ligaments, strain muscles, rupture disks, and irritate joints, all of which can lead to back pain. While sports injuries or accidents can cause back pain, sometimes the simplest of movements—for example, picking up a pencil from the floor—can have painful results. In addition, arthritis, poor posture, obesity, and psychological stress can cause or complicate back pain. Back pain can also directly result from disease of the internal organs, such as kidney stones, kidney infections, blood clots, or bone loss.

### Chiropractic Care as a Treatment for Back Problems

Used primarily by Doctors of Chiropractic (DCs) for the last century, manipulation has been largely ignored by most others in the health care community until recently. Now, with today's growing emphasis on treatment and cost effectiveness, manipulation is receiving more widespread attention. Chiropractic spinal manipulation is a safe and effective spine pain treatment. It reduces pain, decreases medication, rapidly advances physical therapy, and requires very few passive forms of treatment, such as bed rest.<sup>5</sup> In fact, after an extensive study of all currently available care for low back problems, the Agency for Health Care Policy and Research—a federal government research organization—recommended that low back pain sufferers choose the most conservative care first. And it recommended spinal manipulation as the only safe and effective, drugless form of initial professional treatment for acute low back problems in adults.<sup>6</sup>

#### References:

1. Jensen M, Brant-Zawadzki M, Obuchowski N, et al. Magnetic Resonance Imaging of the Lumbar Spine in People Without Back Pain. *N Engl J Med* 1994; 331: 69-116.
2. Vallfors B. Acute, Subacute and Chronic Low Back Pain: Clinical Symptoms, Absenteeism and Working Environment. *Scan J Rehab Med Suppl* 1985; 11: 1-98.
3. This total represents only the more readily identifiable costs for medical care, workers compensation payments and time lost from work. It does not include costs associated with lost personal income due to acquired physical limitation resulting from a back problem and lost employer productivity due to employee medical absence. In Project Briefs: Back Pain Patient Outcomes Assessment Team (BOAT). In MEDTEP Update, Vol. 1 Issue 1, Agency for Health Care Policy and Research, Rockville, MD, Summer 1994.
4. In Vallfors B, previously cited.
5. Time to recognize value of chiropractic care? Science and patient satisfaction surveys cite usefulness of spinal manipulation. *Orthopedics Today* 2003 Feb; 23(2):14-15.
6. Bigos S, Bowyer O, Braen G, et al. Acute Low Back Problems in Adults. Clinical Practice Guideline No.14. AHCPR Publication No. 95-0642. Rockville, MD: Agency for Health Care Policy and Research, Public Health Service, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, December, 1994.

Your resource for chiropractic and health information

[MassChiro.org](http://MassChiro.org)

## Tips to Prevent Back Pain

- Maintain a healthy diet and weight.
- Remain active—under the supervision of your doctor of chiropractic.
- Avoid prolonged inactivity or bed rest.
- Warm up or stretch before exercising or other physical activities, such as gardening.
- Maintain proper posture.
- Wear comfortable, low-heeled shoes.
- Sleep on a mattress of medium firmness to minimize any curve in your spine.
- Lift with your knees, keep the object close to your body, and do not twist when lifting.
- Quit smoking. Smoking impairs blood flow, resulting in oxygen and nutrient deprivation to spinal tissues.
- Work with your doctor of chiropractic to ensure that your computer workstation is ergonomically correct.

## RESEARCH

### **MassChiro.org provides a complete library of relevant research.**

Here are highlighted recent studies supporting the efficacy, cost-effectiveness, and patient satisfaction with chiropractic care regarding back and neck pain, headache, wellness and children's health. For more information and to read each detailed report log onto <http://www.masschiro.org/Research.php>

### **Back Pain**

**Chronic spinal pain - a randomized clinical trial comparing medication, acupuncture, and spinal manipulation** - This study comparing the effects of 3 treatment choices for long-standing spinal pain found chiropractic treatment superior.

**Spinal manipulation reduces pain**-This study explains the role chiropractic plays in relieving back pain and disability by reducing joint inflammation.

### **Neck Pain**

**Chiropractic "Only Proven Effective Treatment" for Chronic Whiplash** - This study published in the Journal of Orthopedic Medicine not only points out the superiority of chiropractic care for chronic whiplash patients, but also examines which chronic whiplash patients respond best to chiropractic care.

**Cost effectiveness of physiotherapy, manual therapy, and general practitioner care for neck pain** - Manual therapy for the treatment of neck pain was more cost effective than physiotherapy or care by a general practitioner.

### **Headache**

**The Duke Study** - Chiropractic care (spinal manipulation) resulted in almost immediate improvement for cervicogenic headaches.

**The Nelson Migraine Study** compared chiropractic spinal manipulation to the frequently prescribed drug amitriptyline and found that patients who had chiropractic care had a significant reduction in headache frequency without side effects commonly associated with the medication.

## Preventive/Wellness

**Degenerative changes following spinal fixation in a small animal model-** This landmark study demonstrates the positive effects of chiropractic in preventing spinal arthritis by restoring proper joint motion.

**Self-reported Nonmusculoskeletal Responses to Chiropractic Intervention-** Some patients with self-reported nonmusculoskeletal symptoms (allergy, asthma, breathing, circulation, digestion, hearing, heart function, ringing in the ears, sinus problems, urination, and others) report definite improvement after chiropractic care.

**Effect of Chiropractic Care on Heart Rate Variability and Pain in a Multisite Clinical Study** -After 4 weeks of chiropractic adjustments pain reported was reduced significantly as well as heart rate.

**Chiropractic patients in a comprehensive home-based geriatric assessment, follow-up and home promotion program** - This interesting study of adults age of 75 and older revealed positive findings for chiropractic patients.

**A Study of Education-**This study compared the education provided in medical school to that provided in chiropractic school. The researchers found that "considerable commonality exists between chiropractic and medical programs."

**IPA Study-**found that patient satisfaction was extremely high.

## Children

**Heart rate changes in response to mild mechanical irritation of the high cervical spinal cord region in infants-** This study revealed that nerve irritation is a trigger that affects heart rate and breathing and therefore may be involved in sudden infant death (SID).

**Chiropractic management of primary nocturnal enuresis-** This study, and others, offers supporting research for the efficacy of chiropractic management of nocturnal bed-wetting.

**An impairment rating analysis of asthmatic children under chiropractic care** -Asthmatic children under chiropractic care demonstrated significantly lower impairment ratings.

**Ear Infection: A Retrospective Study Examining Improvement from Chiropractic Care and analyzing influencing factors**-This study found that children with Otitis Media responded favorably to chiropractic care.

**The Colic Study**- When researchers compared spinal manipulation for the treatment of infantile colic to dimethicone (a medication for colic), they came to a simple conclusion: "Spinal manipulation is effective in relieving infantile colic."

## Cost-Effectiveness

**Effects of a managed chiropractic benefit on the use of specific diagnostic and therapeutic procedures in the treatment of low back and neck pain**- found that for the treatment of low back and neck pain, the inclusion of a chiropractic benefit resulted in a reduction in the rates of surgery, advanced imaging, inpatient care, and plain-film radiographs and overall cost of healthcare.

**Clinical and Cost Outcomes of an Integrative Medicine IPA**-This 2004 National University of Health Sciences study demonstrated the reduced costs and improved outcomes in a sample population that utilized doctors of chiropractic as Primary Care Physicians.

**Comparative Analysis of Individuals With and Without Chiropractic Coverage: Patient Characteristics, Utilization, and Costs**-This extensive four- year study compared total health care costs for low back pain patients with and without chiropractic insurance coverage and found chiropractic care for low back pain significantly reduced total health care costs.

**Testimony to the Department of Veterans Affairs' Chiropractic Advisory Committee** -Foundation for Chiropractic Education and Research trustee testifies before Department of Veterans Affairs' Chiropractic Advisory Committee that chiropractic care is effective and cost-efficient.

**Please logon to [www.masschiro.org](http://www.masschiro.org) for more information**

## History of Chiropractic Care

The roots of chiropractic care can be traced all the way back to the beginning of recorded time. Writings from China and Greece written in 2700 B.C. and 1500 B.C. mention spinal manipulation and the maneuvering of the lower extremities to ease low back pain. Hippocrates, the Greek physician, who lived from 460 to 357 B.C., also published texts detailing the importance of chiropractic care. In one of his writings he declares, "Get knowledge of the spine, for this is the requisite for many diseases".

In the United States, the practice of spinal manipulation began gaining momentum in the late nineteenth century. In 1895, Daniel David Palmer founded the Chiropractic profession in Davenport, Iowa. Palmer was well read in medical journals of his time and had great knowledge of the developments that were occurring throughout the world regarding anatomy and physiology. In 1897, Daniel David Palmer went on to begin the Palmer School of Chiropractic, which has continued to be one of the most prominent chiropractic colleges in the nation.

Throughout the twentieth century, doctors of chiropractic gained legal recognition in all fifty states. In Massachusetts, Governor John Volpe signed chiropractic legislation on June 28, 1966. A continuing recognition and respect for the chiropractic profession in the United States has led to growing support for chiropractic care all over the world. The research that has emerged from "around the world" has yielded incredibly influential results, which have changed, shaped and molded perceptions of chiropractic care. The report, Chiropractic in New Zealand published in 1979 strongly supported the efficacy of chiropractic care and elicited medical cooperation in conjunction with chiropractic care. The 1993 Manga study published in Canada investigated the cost effectiveness of chiropractic care. The results of this study concluded that chiropractic care would save hundreds of millions of dollars annually with regard to work disability payments and direct health care costs. Recent research demonstrating the efficacy, cost-effectiveness and high patient satisfaction with chiropractic care may be viewed at [www.MassChiro.org](http://www.MassChiro.org) and highlights are included in this kit on the sheet entitled Current Developments.

Doctors of chiropractic have become pioneers in the field of non-invasive care promoting science-based approaches to a variety of ailments. A continuing dedication to chiropractic research could lead to even more discoveries in preventing and combating maladies in future years.

## Current Developments

MassChiro celebrates **40 years of chiropractic licensure** in Massachusetts.

Governor John A. Volpe, on June 28, 1966, signed an Act establishing the Board of Registration of Chiropractors and defining its powers and duties.

**October 16, 2006 is World Spine Day/National Spinal Health Day initiated by The International Bone and Joint Decade Committee** to call attention to the burden of spinal disability during the Decade's National Action Week. "Straighten Up America" a free, public service program, was launched by the chiropractic profession in 2004 and will be featured this month nationwide. This 3-minute program is equally useful as an ergonomic break, exercise warm-up or cool-down. "Straighten Up America" is designed to get people of all ages up and moving, while they improve their posture and spinal health. The program also includes a set of healthy lifestyle recommendations congruent with the goals and objectives of national and international physical activity and health promotion initiatives. "Straighten Up America" is proud to be a 50th Anniversary Partner to "Get America Moving", an initiative of the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports during its fiftieth anniversary year (1956-2006). Logon to our website for the Straighten Up America Program PDF.

<http://www.masschiro.org/Articles.php?topic=2&story=63>

### **Other current topics and related articles include;**

#### **[Does Back Pain Go Away on Its Own?](#)**

Studies show that when back pain is not treated, it may go away temporarily but will most likely return. Find out how chiropractic can prevent that painful cycle.

#### **[Don't Take Arthritis Lying Down](#)**

Recent research and recommendations for those with arthritis.

#### **[Chiropractic Advice for Pregnancy](#)**

The weight gain, the bloating, the nausea...learn what you can do to find relief from the increased low back pain brought on by pregnancy.

#### **[Chiropractors Offer Help and Hope to Children with Attention Deficit Disorder](#)**

While many parents grow leery of the traditional medical approach to ADHD, chiropractors offer promising results with non-drug treatments that focus on postural muscles, nutrition and lifestyle changes that affect brain activity.

## 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, and pain in the joints of the arms or legs, and headaches. Chiropractic is a natural method of health care with the proven ability to relieve back and neck pain, increase vitality, and promote well-being. For over a century, doctors of chiropractic have successfully helped millions of individuals recover from health problems. As a result, chiropractic has earned its place as the largest drugless and non-surgical health care profession in the United States.

## How can a chiropractor help?

Doctors of Chiropractic, also 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.

Doctors of chiropractic are specially trained in the evaluation and treatment of spinal conditions, which is why increasing numbers are turning to them for fast, effective, and reliable care. The Doctor of Chiropractic degree centers on advanced clinical sciences including orthopedics, neurology, examination procedures, differential diagnosis, and X-ray interpretation. During this entire process, aspiring doctors of chiropractic gain knowledge of the philosophy and practice of health care and chiropractic. Doctors of chiropractic refine their technical adjusting skills in technique classes. During clinical internships student doctors perfect these skills. Finally, all doctors of chiropractic must pass the rigorous national board exams and state exams before entering the field.

The benefits of chiropractic care have also been shown to extend beyond reduction of back and neck pain. In fact, chiropractic has proven itself as useful in the reduction of headache pain, carpal tunnel syndrome, jaw pain, sciatica, and tingling in the arms and legs. The rewards of chiropractic care are numerous. People under chiropractic care report better health and well-being and many families have realized the benefits of chiropractic care for their children. Visit the Research section of [MassChiro.org](http://MassChiro.org) to view the library of studies supporting chiropractic care.

## How does chiropractic work?

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. 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.

## Is chiropractic safe?

Yes. Its non-surgical, drug-free approach to health places chiropractic among the safest of all health care practices. Remember, chiropractic takes nothing out of the body and puts nothing in. As a result, chiropractors enjoy one of the lowest malpractice rates of all health care professionals. Please visit [www.MassChiro.org](http://www.MassChiro.org) and visit the Safety sections of Research and Articles for more information and relative risks tables.