

## 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.