



AN INTRODUCTION TO CHIROPRACTIC CARE

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Chiropractic is one of the largest primary contact health professions in Canada. Approximately four and a half million Canadians use the services of a chiropractor each year. Despite the professions growing popularity, there are still many in the public who don't exactly know what services a chiropractor performs or what qualifications and training they possess. This article is the first of a two part series introducing the chiropractic health discipline and the profession's role in the health care system.

A large majority of patients who seek chiropractic care do so for complaints of the musculoskeletal system (joints, muscles, tendons, nerves and bones). Chiropractors provide diagnosis, treatment and management of these complaints which may include but are not limited to: back pain, neck pain, sciatica, whiplash, osteoarthritis, migraine and tension headaches, upper and lower extremity complaints, along with repetitive strain, sport, work and motor vehicle injuries.

Chiropractic practitioners undergo a rigorous course of study similar to that of other health professionals. Training involves a minimum of three years undergraduate university education, followed by another four years of intensive academic and clinical education at an accredited chiropractic college. Becoming licensed to practice chiropractic requires all eligible candidates to pass national and provincial examinations before applying to the Licensing Board. Specialized post-graduate training enables the chiropractors of today to offer their patients additional treatment options.



Chiropractic in Canada is regulated by provincial statute in all provinces (The Chiropractic Act, 1991), created in accordance with the Regulated Health Professions Act (RHPA, 1991). Chiropractors along with medical doctors, dentists, psychologists, and optometrists have the legislated right and obligation to communicate a diagnosis and to use the title doctor. The College of Chiropractors of Ontario, like the colleges in each of the other provinces, is similar to the regulatory bodies for other health professions. It is responsible for protecting the public, standards of practice, disciplinary issues, quality assurance and maintenance of competency.

Chiropractic is well recognized within the health care system. Chiropractic care is covered by the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) for occupational injuries, by automobile insurance in the event of a motor vehicle accident (MVA) injury, and by many Extended Health Care (EHC) plans. A medical referral is not necessary to access chiropractic care. Chiropractic adjustments are just one mode of therapy utilized by chiropractors today (but not with every patient). Some chiropractors are also trained to employ other forms of physical therapy such as acupuncture, electrotherapy, soft tissue therapy, and rehabilitative exercises. If your complaint is not something that would respond favorably to chiropractic care, a referral is made to the appropriate health professional.



Additional chiropractic resources can be found at: (www.nhwc.ca), (www.chiropractic.on.ca), and (www.ccachiro.org). Join us next month for the second part of this series on chiropractic where you will learn about the chiropractic experience from a patient's perspective.

This article is a basic summary for educational purposes only. It is not intended, and should not be considered, as a replacement for consultation, diagnosis or treatment by a duly licensed health practitioner.