

CHIROPRACTIC CARE FOR SENIORS

Chiropractors help millions of aging individuals regain control of their lives every year. Chiropractic care for this segment of the population is designed to eliminate acute and chronic pain, increase flexibility, improve mobility and function, restore postural alignment, enhance balance, de-stress and tune the nervous system, improve general health and wellbeing, and increase the overall quality of one's life.

Why Is Chiropractic Care So Important For The Maturing Adult?

Chiropractic care is extremely important for the maturing and elderly adult because of the dramatic changes that occur in the spine with increasing age. As we age, spinal discs, joints, ligaments, muscles and other spinal tissues become weaker, less hydrated, more fibrous, and less able to withstand normal strain. As a result, spinal pain from spinal degeneration (arthritis) becomes more prominent, tissue injury from relatively benign events occurs, and the time to heal from injuries increases.

Modern chiropractic procedures take into consideration the nature of the aging spine and the many abnormalities present to provide an effective, safe and non-invasive treatment plan. Through the use of 21st century gentle adjusting techniques, physical therapies, and incorporation of stretching and exercise programs spinal pain is reduced, spinal stresses are decreased, flexibility and mobility are improved, and degeneration is minimized.

What Benefits Does Chiropractic Care Provide For The Maturing Adult?

Routine chiropractic care has a number of benefits which are especially important for maturing adults:

- ✓ Spinal and extremity pain relief
- ✓ Decreased stiffness and muscular spasms
- ✓ Increased mobility and range of motion
- ✓ Straighter posture
- ✓ Increased balance and coordination
- ✓ Increased sense of well being
- ✓ Increased energy
- ✓ Enhanced tissue healing
- ✓ Decreased tissue inflammation
- ✓ Decreased arthritis and arthritic joint pain
- ✓ Minimized spinal stress and tension
- ✓ Reduced risk of fall injuries



Are There Any Studies Showing The Benefits of Chiropractic Care In The Aging?

According to one paper chiropractors may be well-positioned to play an important role in health promotion, injury and disease prevention, and on geriatric care teams, due to their practice style and holistic philosophy. Chiropractic services are safe and relatively low-cost, and patient satisfaction with them is very high. Relative to musculoskeletal care in elderly patients, chiropractic adjustments are recommended by the Agency for Health Care Policy and Research for the care of acute low back pain, and the American Geriatric Society Panel Guidelines for the Management of Chronic Pain state that non-pharmaceutical interventions such as chiropractic may be appropriate. Various lower-force chiropractic techniques are available as safe alternatives to drugs and surgery for musculoskeletal complaints in the older patient. Due to the prevalence of these conditions in older patients, and the success of chiropractic

in caring for these patients, interdisciplinary geriatric health care teams should include the doctor of chiropractic.

(Killingier LZ. Chiropractic and geriatrics: a review of the training, role, and scope of chiropractic in caring for aging patients. Clin Geriatr Med. 2004 May; 20(2):223-35.)

One study evaluated the health status of 414 elderly individuals (average age of 80 years) and compared those individuals under chiropractic care with those not under chiropractic care. The researchers found a number of significant findings which included:

- ✓ 87% of those who used chiropractic care rated their health as good or excellent compared with only 68% in the non-chiropractic group
- ✓ Only 13% of those who used chiropractic care rated their health as fair or poor compared with 32% in the non-chiropractic group
- ✓ 44% of those who used chiropractic care reported having arthritis compared with 66% in the non-chiropractic care group
- ✓ Those who used chiropractic care were more likely to still be doing strenuous levels of exercise
- ✓ At 3 years follow-up, less than 5% of those who used chiropractic care used a nursing home while a staggering 48% of those who did not use chiropractic care did use a nursing home
- ✓ At 3 years follow-up, only 26% of those who used chiropractic care were hospitalized compared with 48% of those in the non-chiropractic group



(Coulter, PhD et al. Chiropractic and Care for the Elderly. Top Clin Chiro 1996; 3(2):46-55.)

Other research attempted to define more clearly the exact nature of Chiropractic Maintenance Care (MC). The study population consisted of elderly chiropractic patients who had received health-promotion and prevention services for at least five years at a minimum of four chiropractic visits per year. Patients were selected from 73 chiropractic offices in six geographic locations across the USA. Doctors enrolled the first 10 consenting patients who met the inclusion criteria, and data were gathered on health habits, expenditures of health services, frequency of use, and perceived value of chiropractic prevention and health promotion services. Results included:

- ✓ An average of 16.95 visits were made per patient per year for chiropractic MC treatments
- ✓ 95.8% believed the care to be either "considerably" or "extremely" valuable
- ✓ Stretching exercises, aerobic exercises, dietary advice, and other prevention strategies were commonly recommended
- ✓ Patients reported making only half the annual number of visits to medical providers compared with the national average for patients 65 and older
- ✓ Spent only 31% of the national average for health care services
- ✓ The health habits of patients receiving MC were similar to or better than the general population

(Rupert RL, Manello D, Sandefur R. Maintenance care: health promotion services administered to U.S. chiropractic patients aged 65 and older, Part II. Journal of Manipulative and Physiological Therapeutics, Jan. 2000: 23(1), pp10-19.)

What Can Chiropractic Care Do For You?

Chiropractic Increases Spinal Range of Motion: Increasing spinal range of motion can positively influence lives in many ways. For some, an increased range of motion means being able to bend down to pick up the grandchildren. For others, it translates into an extra 30 yards of distance out of their driver on the golf course.

Chiropractic Decreases the Frequency and Severity of Back, Neck and Head Pain: The adjustments utilized by chiropractors have been consistently shown to be one of the most effective and safest forms of care to treat the majority of back, neck and head pain complaints. This is because most causes of back, neck and head disorders are related to abnormalities of the soft tissue components within the spine – something doctors of chiropractic are specifically trained to identify and treat.

Chiropractic Increases Balance and Coordination: As we age, balance and coordination become increasingly impaired. Studies have shown that the receptors located in the joints of the upper cervical spine are largely responsible for providing the brain with essential information important for balance and coordination. Research has also shown that injury to these "neck" receptors is a significant cause of balance and coordination problems in humans.

Studies have shown that chiropractic care can help restore balance and coordination by stimulating the joint receptors (mechanoreceptors) in the cervical spine. This stimulation is thought to restore or normalize joint receptor functioning which leads to improvements in balance and coordination.

Chiropractic Can Decrease Fall Injuries, as well as Other Injuries: Fall injuries are extremely prevalent in the elderly population and are one of the most detrimental events that can occur to the older individual. Falls are one of the major cause of health problems in the elderly:

- ✘ Responsible for 90% of the 850,000 bone fractures which occur annually among Americans past the age of 65
- ✘ In people over the age of 65 account for over 80% of injury related hospital admissions and they are the leading cause of accidental death
- ✘ New Zealand: 230 deaths per year and Australia = 1000 deaths per year
- ✘ One third of community dwelling older adults experiences one or more falls each year
- ✘ Australia: Related health care costs estimated to be as high as \$4,500,000,000 annually
- ✘ USA: Related health-care costs as much as \$30,000,000,000 annually



Chiropractors reduce the risk of falls by:

- 1) Specific chiropractic adjustment techniques to normalize spinal joint receptors which provide the brain with important balance and coordination information
- 2) Stretching and exercise programs to increase strength, flexibility, mobility, balance and coordination
- 3) Diet and nutritional counseling to improve nutritional status, increase energy levels, and increase sense of well-being

Chiropractic Increases Joint Nutrition and Relieves Spinal Joint Arthritis: Spinal discs and spinal joints receive their nutrition and eliminate their wastes through joint movement. Without sufficient movement, adhesions and scar tissue will soon develop in the joints.

Chiropractic care involves restoring and optimizing spinal and extra-spinal joint motion which brings vital nutrients into the joint and flushes toxic waste products out. This helps keep the joints healthy and minimizes the degenerative joint changes which lead to arthritis.

Chiropractic Decreases Joint and Tissue Degeneration: Similar to an out-of-aligned wheel on an automobile, a misaligned spine with abnormal biomechanics will wear out prematurely. As all moving parts will eventually wear down over time, it's important to get the maximum "mileage" out of your spine, especially since it's the only one you'll ever get.

Chiropractic Restores Postural Alignment: Bad posture has been linked with aches and pains, poor emotional state, increased disability, reduced health and wellbeing, and even premature death. In

general people's posture becomes more rounded, compressed and distorted with age. Maintaining regular chiropractic care can help to reduce the underlying biomechanical and neurological causes of poor posture.

Chiropractic Balances and Tunes the Nervous System: Modern chiropractic techniques are less about bones and muscles, and more about nerves and energy. By analysing and correcting the stored tension that builds up in everyone's body, chiropractic adjustments can help to tune up the whole body. The older we get, the more accumulated stress and strain we carry, and the more we can benefit from a regular chiropractic adjustment.

Chiropractic Increases Health and Well-Being: When you're free from nagging pain, stiff joints and can do the things you enjoy (golf, gardening, playing with the grandchildren, etc.) life is far more enjoyable. Feeling good, staying healthy and doing the things that make us happy are what keeps us looking forward to each new day.

Regular chiropractic care in those over the age of 40 is aimed at increasing the quality of life, and not just the elimination of pain and correction of soft tissue abnormalities. Don't cheat yourself from living life to its fullest...

What Else Can Chiropractic Help?

Chiropractic care can be useful for so much more than aches and pains: Over the years many case studies, case series and longitudinal research has shown that chiropractic care can be beneficial for many ailments that commonly plague our aging population:

Parkinson's Disease, Multiple Sclerosis, Anxiety, Depression, Sciatica, Headaches, Migraines, Asthma, Infections, Dizziness, Vertigo and Meniere's Disease, Shoulder, Knee and Hip problems.

ADD YEARS TO YOUR LIFE



AND LIFE TO YOUR YEARS



WITH CHIROPRACTIC ADJUSTMENTS

You can consult Dr Nick Hodgson, 2005 Victorian Chiropractor of the Year, at our Super Healthy office at Shop 1A, 186 High Street in Belmont by calling 0419 104 076, or if you are living in a retirement village or nursing home call us to discuss having us visit you.