OPTIMAL HEALTH UNIVERSITY™

Presented by Dr. Smith

Why Do I Need Chiropractic Care If I Am Not In Pain?

Many people consider visiting a chiropractor only after suffering years of unnecessary pain. However, Dr. Smith knows that focusing on prevention is key to long-term well-being. That means adopting a proactive approach to health. Just as you schedule regular dental cleanings to prevent tooth and gum decay, it's essential to arrange consistent chiropractic checkups to stave off spinal decay and related ailments.



What is chiropractic preventive wellness care?

Referred to as proactive care, spinal hygiene, maintenance care, preventive care, wellness care or preventive wellness care, this revolutionary chiropractic program rests on the philosophy that long-term well-being stems from eradicating underlying causes of future conditions — stopping them before they start.

Who tries chiropractic preventive care?

Dr. Smith finds that patients embark on wellness care programs in one of two circumstances.

Today's savvy health-care consumers are enlightened about the benefits of preventive care and the dangers of painkillers and other medication. The health-care tide is turning as many individuals shift their attitude about health care from one of "damage control" to one centering on prevention. This renaissance in the way we regard health care has sparked a growing number of forward-thinking, pain-free people to seek out chiropractic wellness care.

A second group of people discover the benefits of wellness care after receiving chiropractic care for pain relief. When their pain subsides, they transition into a wellness care plan.

Why should I continue chiropractic care after my injury is resolved?

Not only is spinal manipulative therapy (SMT) effective, but ongoing maintenance care results in better long-term outcomes. These findings are from a study published in the journal *Spine*.

The prospective, blinded, placebo-controlled study tracked 60 patients, with chronic, nonspecific low-back pain lasting at least six months.

According to the article, patients "were randomized to receive either (1) 12 treatments of sham SMT over a 1-month period, (2) 12 treatments, consisting of SMT over a 1-month period, but no treatments for the subsequent 9 months, or (3) 12 treatments over a 1-month period, along with "maintenance spinal manipulation" every 2 weeks for the following 9 months. To determine any difference among therapies, we measured pain and disability scores, generic health status, and back-specific patient satisfaction at baseline and at 1-, 4-, 7-, and 10-month intervals."

Results revealed that "patients in second and third groups experienced significantly lower pain and disability scores than first group at the end of 1-month period. … However, only the third group that was given spinal manipulations (SM) during the follow-up period showed more improvement in pain and disability scores at the 10-month evaluation."

The study's authors conclude: "SMT is effective for the treatment of chronic nonspecific LBP. To obtain long-term benefit, this study suggests maintenance SM after the initial intensive manipulative therapy." (*Spine* 2011;36:1427-37.)

What happens during a wellness care visit?

A preventive chiropractic checkup typically includes a posture analysis and a spinal examination to detect areas in the spine where movement is restricted or spinal bones (vertebrae) are slightly out of place.

These dysfunctional spinal segments are called ***vertebral subluxations***. Dr. Smith corrects these areas with gentle and effective maneuvers called ***chiropractic adjustments*** (also known as spinal manipulative therapy or SMT).

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Because wellness visits are focused on prevention rather than pain relief, the doctor takes time to educate patients about factors influencing long-term disease prevention, with a holistic — whole person — emphasis. Therefore, this visit incorporates late-breaking research information on topics like ergonomics, nutrition, stress reduction, the side effects of medication, environmental toxins, exercise and how emotional outlook affects the body. The goal is to identify and remove any risk factors before they trigger disease.

Why should I schedule a chiropractic checkup when I'm not in pain?

Symptoms are ***not*** the "early warning signs" many individuals consider them to be.

Symptoms like pain or restricted movement usually do not appear until late in a disease process — often when it is too late for the malady to be reversed.

By maintaining a subluxation-free spine, preventive checkups correct the underlying trigger of conditions like back pain, headaches, carpal tunnel syndrome and jaw pain.

Chiropractic wellness care also holds more sinister maladies at bay. For instance, scientific studies show that unrestricted joints have better range of motion — making them less likely to be depleted of joint fluid and cartilage. By keeping joints mobile, chiropractic helps prevent conditions like osteoarthritis before the advent of joint degeneration — and long before symptoms emerge.

It's especially important to ward off arthritis before pain appears, because the severity of degeneration to the spine is not necessarily associated with pain. In one study, 180 patients with neck pain completed questionnaires and a disability assessment. They also underwent X-ray imaging to determine the extent of degeneration in the spine of their necks (cervical spines).

Results revealed no statistically significant difference in pain severity or disability between the patients with — and without — cervical degeneration.

"According to the findings, the number of levels of cervical degeneration and the severity of degeneration in the discs [and joint of the spine] are not related to the levels of pain and disability." (*Spine* 2003;27:129-33.)



I have heard that chiropractic care may prevent problems not directly related to the spine. Is that true?

Yes. Exciting new scientific evidence indicates that people who follow a chiropractic wellness plan enjoy a better overall quality of life. Wellness care patients often report a reduced occurrence of colds, allergies and other ailments. Many professional athletes adhere to a chiropractic preventive care program because they say it enhances their performance. Bolstered energy, sharpened mental functioning, decreased fatigue, more restful sleep and diminished stress are other benefits mentioned by preventive care patients.

And, research indicates that chiropractic wellness care may prevent a myriad of diseases not typically related to the spine. These include breathing problems, hypertension, multiple sclerosis, Parkinson's disease, hearing problems, infertility, intestinal disorders, asthma, ear infections and infantile colic. And that's just for starters!

Is wellness care expensive?

As with all aspects of health, the old adage that "a stitch in time saves nine" applies to chiropractic care. Savvy health-care consumers know that recurring chiropractic checkups ward off expensive and disabling conditions down the road.

By keeping you free of pain and disability, wellness care eliminates the need for costly medication and surgery, saving you money in the long run.

While health is priceless, we understand that cost is a concern for some. This chiropractic office works with patients to develop creative, affordable individual and family payment plans to fit any budget. Before assuming that your family cannot manage the expense of wellness care, please ask us about these opportunities — you'll be surprised how reasonable they are!

How frequent are regular wellness checkups?

The frequency of preventive checkups depends on a host of factors. Only your doctor of chiropractic can determine the optimal incidence for your wellness care visits.

At what point should I talk to the doctor about wellness care options?

It is never too early to start planning for preventive care. Even if you are still under a pain management care plan, ask the doctor today about when you can transition to a wellness care plan, and what types of programs are available.

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