

Doctors of chiropractic (DCs) are considered primary care professionals for spinal health and well-being. For the license to practice in each state, DCs complete a minimum seven years of higher level education. The credentialing process for DCs begins with the completion of the four-part examination sequence of the National Board of Chiropractic Examiners, which is then followed by the specific requirements of a given State for licensure to practice chiropractic.

DCs practice a drug-free, hands-on approach that includes patient examination, diagnosis, care and referral or co-management when indicated. DCs are known for the well-studied care of spinal manipulation (chiropractic adjustment), an intervention in which they apply a controlled specific force to spinal or extremity joints in order to enhance motion and alignment and alleviate pain. Chiropractic care is used most often to treat neuro-musculoskeletal complaints, but not limited to: back pain, neck pain, pain in the joints of the arms and legs and headaches.

CHIROPRACTIC EDUCATION

Doctors of chiropractic go through rigorous training and education to receive a doctor of chiropractic degree. Their collegiate agenda is as follows:

- The majority graduate from a four-year college with a preferred focus on health sciences.
- Four years of chiropractic education.
- After graduating, pass written and oral board exams, at national and state levels.
- A doctor of chiropractic may opt to choose to advance their degree in an area of specialty. These areas include: chiropractic neurology, radiology, sports medicine, acupuncture, as well as many other fields.
- A curriculum that includes, but is not limited to, the following subject matter:
 - **Foundations** – principles, practices, philosophy and history of chiropractic.
 - **Basic Sciences** – anatomy; physiology; biochemistry; microbiology and pathology.
 - **Clinical Sciences** – physical, clinical and laboratory diagnosis; diagnostic imaging; spinal analysis; orthopedics; biomechanics; neurology; spinal adjustment/manipulation; extremities manipulation; rehabilitation and therapeutic modalities/procedures (active and passive care); toxicology/pharmacology; patient management; nutrition; organ systems; special populations; first aid and emergency procedures; wellness and public health; and clinical decision-making.
 - **Professional Practice** – ethics and integrity; jurisprudence; business and practice management and professional communications.

DCs HAVE APPROPRIATE DIAGNOSTIC SKILLS AND ARE WELL-TRAINED TO:

- Recommend therapeutic and rehabilitative exercises.
- Recommend or apply a wide-range of soft tissue mobilization techniques.
- Recommend or apply physical modalities such as heat, laser, ultrasound, electrotherapies.
- Provide nutritional, ergonomic and lifestyle counseling.
- Some DCs are certified to perform acupuncture.

BENEFITS OF CHIROPRACTIC

Scientific evidence and clinical experience indicates that chiropractic care offers the following benefits for many patients:

- Reduction of acute, subacute and chronic back and neck pain with improved function.
- Reduction of upper and lower extremity pain with improved function.
- Relief from certain forms of headache.
- Relief from pregnancy-related backache.
- Amelioration of many hip, gait and foot problems.
- Improvements in general flexibility, stability, balance and coordination.
- Improved ability to perform activities of daily living.