

# A Parent's Guide to Chiropractic

## Q. What is Chiropractic?

Doctors of Chiropractic attempt to get to the root cause of a health problem rather than just treat the symptoms. They seek to maximize the natural strengths of the body and its capacity to heal itself without the use of drugs or surgery. The primary focus of chiropractic is the detection, reduction and correction of spinal misalignments and nervous system dysfunction.

Misaligned vertebrae (known as subluxations) can irritate the nerves and disrupt the body's ability to send "command center" messages through the spine to different parts of the body such as the tissue, bone, glands and organs. All parts of the human body require proper nerve energy and a flow of information in order to function properly. If left uncorrected, a spinal malfunction can interrupt this internal communication system and cause pain, muscle and organ dysfunction and other imbalances.

The Doctor of Chiropractic, through a procedure called adjustments, helps to restore misaligned vertebrae to a more normal position, thus allowing the nerves to properly communicate with the rest of the body and let the body heal itself – safely and naturally. Chiropractic's drugless and preventive approach to good health makes it perfectly appropriate for infants, children and teenagers.

## Q. When should I take my child to a Doctor of Chiropractic?

When you want your child to have all the benefits of a conservative, drugless approach to health care. Your child's first visit to the Doctor of Chiropractic can be a pleasant experience, one without painful injections and procedures, but with plenty of nurturing. A Doctor of Chiropractic should examine your child during that all-important first year of life when spinal trauma can occur during birth as well as from tumbles while learning to sit up or walk. Improper lifting and carrying of your child can also contribute to spinal stress. Your child's spine grows almost 50% in length during the first year (the equivalent of a six-footer growing to nine feet in just 12 months!). It's this kind of tremendous growth and developmental changes which make a complete chiropractic examination so important in the early stages of your child's life.

**When you want to give your child a head start in good health.** Doctors of Chiropractic believe it's much more important to prevent diseases than wait till some illness occurs. Through regular adjustments, counseling on proper diet, exercise and posture the Doctors of Chiropractic can help you raise a child whose body is structurally and functionally sound. Your child will also learn good health habits at an early age which can be very beneficial to him or her as an adult.

**When your child takes a fall.** Youngsters take numerous tumbles while learning to walk, riding a bike, or even while jumping or running around. But after their tears have dried, underlying injuries could go undetected – such as a misaligned vertebra during the spins most formative

period. Regular spinal exams by the Doctor of Chiropractic can provide corrective and preventive care for your son or daughter and peace of mind for you.

**When your child takes part in athletic activities.** The “sack” of a young quarterback could twist a young spine. A softball pitcher could throw a vertebra out of alignment. Doctors of Chiropractic can do more than correct these problems; they can also help improve performance on and off the field by helping the body function at its optimum level, naturally without stress and without drugs.

### **Q. How safe is chiropractic for my child?**

Chiropractic is one of the safest forms of health care. A baby’s spine is very supple during the first few months of life and the Doctor of Chiropractic applies only a slight pressure to make spinal adjustments. Under normal circumstances, chiropractic adjustments are painless and will not hurt your child. Chiropractors do not use drugs which sometimes cause more harmful side effects than the progression of the disease itself. Drugs can also create the potential of addiction, even in young children. The Doctor of Chiropractic does not perform any invasive procedures (such as surgery) which sometimes can have irreversible side effects. These are some of the reasons why malpractice insurance rates for chiropractors are only a fraction of what physicians pay and why more than 30 million Americans choose chiropractic for a variety of childhood illnesses. This body of scientific evidence is growing every day.

### **Q. What if my child has a health problem that doesn’t respond to chiropractic care?**

Doctors of Chiropractic are trained to recognize complex health problems. Their primary obligation is the welfare of the child. When they reach their limits of skill and authority, the International Chiropractors Association’s position is that “doctors in all fields of practice are ethically and morally bound to make patient referrals to practitioners in other fields of healing when such referrals are necessary to provide the highest quality of patient care.”