

# Dr. Colin Gage

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*"treating the cause of your problem, not just the symptoms"*

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## What is Chiropractic?

Last weekend I was at a social event and someone asked me what is that I do for work. I told them that I was a chiropractor. After a brief discussion with this person, it was apparent that she had never been to a chiropractor and had no idea how one could help a person lead a healthy and active lifestyle. It always surprises me how someone can know so little about the chiropractic profession when it is one of the largest primary care health professions in Canada with over 6,000 practicing chiropractors. Particularly when approximately four and a half million Canadians use the services of a chiropractor each year. Therefore, I thought it would be appropriate for this week's article to give a brief description of what it is that a chiropractor does.

### **Natural, non-invasive approach to health care**

Chiropractors practice a drug-free, manual approach to health care that includes patient assessment, diagnosis and treatment. In particular, chiropractors assess patients for disorders related to the spine, pelvis, extremity joints, and their effect on the nervous system. Chiropractors are also trained to recommend therapeutic exercise, to utilize other non-invasive therapies, as well as to provide nutritional, dietary and lifestyle counseling.

Adjustment is the most common form of treatment utilized by chiropractors in clinical practice. Also known as spinal manipulative therapy, adjustment is a non-invasive, manual procedure that utilizes the highly refined skills developed through four years of intensive chiropractic education. Adjustment is a carefully controlled procedure delivered by a skilled practitioner to dysfunctional spinal or extremity joints. The primary goal is to decrease pain and restore function by improving areas of reduced movement in the joints and supporting tissues, and decreasing muscle tightness or spasm. This allows the body to heal and maintain the region completely and naturally

The vast majority of patients who seek chiropractic health care do so for complaints of the musculoskeletal system, most often for conditions affecting the spine such as back pain, neck pain and headaches. Research studies have demonstrated that chiropractic treatment is effective for these conditions.

Legislative bodies across Canada, as well as researchers and governments around the world have conducted extensive reviews of the chiropractic profession and have consistently endorsed chiropractic services.

### **Primary Care**

Chiropractors are regulated, primary care health providers. In cases such as low back pain, chiropractic care may be the preferred method of treatment. Where other medical conditions exist, chiropractic care may support medical treatment by relieving the musculoskeletal aspects associated with the condition. Chiropractic care may also be palliative, providing symptomatic relief of the musculoskeletal disorders associated with chronic conditions.

### **Regulation & standards**

Chiropractic is regulated by provincial statute in all provinces. 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. Each province has a regulatory college established by legislation in the same manner, and with the same structure and similar regulations, as the regulatory bodies for other health care professions. The regulatory colleges are responsible for protecting the public, standards of practice, disciplinary issues, quality assurance and maintenance of competency.

If you have any further questions about what a chiropractor does and how one could help you, please do not hesitate to call my office directly.