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AHCPR Guidelines

Whether or not you have low back pain, chiropractic care is one of the best ways to help keep your spine healthy. Chiropractic is based on a simple but powerful premise: With a normally functioning spine and a healthy lifestyle, your body is better able to heal itself. Your doctor of chiropractic guides you in a personal approach to overall wellness—through spinal care, exercise, good nutrition, and stress management.

AHCPR GUIDELINES On Acute Low Back Problems

What Are the AHCPR Guidelines on Acute Low Back Problems

When the Agency for Health Care Policy and Research (AHCPR) funded a study on acute low back problems, the review panel recommended only three types of treatment for short-term, nonspecific low back pain in adults:

Spinal manipulation

Over-the-counter medications, such as aspirin.

Low-stress exercise: walking, swimming, or riding a stationary bicycle

For most cases, the panel recommended against prolonged bed rest, corsets, massage, traction, and surgery. In fact, they found that only 1 in 100 back surgeries is helpful.



AHCPR Guidelines

Funded by the U.S. Government

AHCPR is an agency of the U.S Department of Health and Human Services. The 23-member review panel was appointed by the agency, but conducted its 3-year study independently. The panel included 12 medical doctors, 2 doctors of chiropractic, 2 physical therapists, and 2 nurses, as well as other health care professionals. The study was done because as many as 8 out of 10 adults have low back pain at some time during their lives.

Based on Scientific Evidence

The AHCPR guidelines are based on scientific research. The panel reviewed more than 3,900 articles on all the treatment options now used for acute low back problems. (The panel defined acute as lasting less than 3 months.) Their recommendations are based only on the findings of studies that met strict research criteria, as well as on the clinical experience of the panel members and on public testimony.

Spinal Manipulation Works

The guidelines recommend spinal manipulation for acute low back pain—following a physical exam to rule out a serious underlying medical condition. These guidelines help to confirm what doctors of chiropractic have known and practiced for more than century: Manipulating the spine is safer, works better, and is less costly than drugs or surgery. It relieves low back pain and gets patients back to their normal activities sooner.

Doctors of Chiropractic Are the Best Qualified to Do Spinal Manipulation

The AHCPR Guidelines say that spinal manipulation should be done only by a qualified professional. Chiropractors have more training and experience in spinal manipulation than any other health professionals. They perform more than 90% of the spinal manipulations in the U.S. To receive their Doctor of Chiropractic (DC) degree, they complete more than 500 hours of study and clinical practice in spinal manipulation as part of their professional training.

Adjustments Relieve Pain

The chiropractic method of spinal manipulation is called an adjustment. A chiropractor first does a physical exam to check the condition of your spine. If you chiropractor finds any problems, he or she uses special methods to gently press on joints in the spine. This helps restore motion and alignment, and reduce nerve irritation. In a Gallup poll, 9 out of 10 chiropractic patients said that chiropractic adjustments had relieved their low back pain.

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