

Low Back Pain Educational Pamphlet



SOUTH SOUND
PAIN RELIEF
CLINIC

**Relieving Pain and Restoring Health
Through Manual Methods**

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Low Back Pain

Natural History

Most cases of acute lower back pain will resolve within 6 to 8 weeks, with or without treatment. One of the great challenges of lower back pain is that it has a very high recurrence rate. More than 70% of those with an initial episode of lower back pain which resolves within 6 weeks will have a recurrence of back pain within 1 year.

(P. Croft, BMJ).

One 2005 medical study of spinal pain stated that the “lifetime prevalence of spinal pain has been reported as 54 to 80%, with as many as 60% of patients continuing to have chronic pain five years or longer after the initial episode.”¹

Treatment Options

Treatment options for low back pain, listed from least invasive to most invasive, include:

- Self administered care, such as over-the-counter pain medications and relative rest. (staying away from activities that generate/ aggravate the pain)
- Physical medicine care such as chiropractic care, physical therapy care, exercise rehabilitation programs, and back school programs
- Medical care with prescription drugs (e.g. anti-inflammatory medications, muscle relaxants, narcotic pain-relievers), injections into joints, discs, or nerves to block pain
- Hospitalization, surgery, multidisciplinary rehabilitation centers

The best treatment option may involve several of the above choices to achieve the best results.

Risks/ Benefits

Chiropractic care for low back pain has been shown to compare favorably to medical care for the same condition with respect to long-term pain and disability outcomes.²

In order to fully recover from your current condition, your doctor will likely prescribe therapeutic exercises, stretches, ergonomic advice, and lifestyle modifications. Nutritional counseling for optimal health may also be discussed. Laboratory and diagnostic imaging studies may also be performed and/or ordered by your doctor if necessary for your condition prior to beginning treatment.

A key treatment administered by doctors of chiropractic is spinal manipulation, also known as an “adjustment.” We offer techniques that range from traditional manual manipulation to gentle mobilization procedures.

Your doctor will palpate (feel) and examine your spine for several indicators of the need for

manipulation/adjustment. These include:

- Regions of local muscle tightness and tenderness
- Asymmetry in the contours of the spine
- Restrictions in overall movement of the spine

The goal of chiropractic treatment is to:

- Increase the joint mobility/range of motion
- Relieve pain
- Reduce muscle spasm
- Restore optimal joint function

What should I do after being adjusted?

- Stay Active
- Try to use your full range of motion
- Although you feel better, you may not be fully recovered. Do not jump into strenuous activities too early.
- Do your home exercises and stretches as recommended.
- Stay active without creating too much discomfort.
- Avoid bed rest unless specifically advised by your doctor

Approximately 20% of patients will experience some temporary stiffness and soreness following the first couple treatments.

The risk of serious injury has been estimated between one in one million to one in ten million with cervical manipulation. The risks with lumbar manipulation are estimated to be significantly lower than that. If you have specific concerns about potential complications from receiving chiropractic manipulation, please discuss them with the doctor before receiving treatment.

Chiropractors receive the highest level of education in spinal manipulative therapy of any healthcare profession. They also administer greater than 90% of skilled manipulation services provided in the United States.

Risks inherent in other treatment options not offered at this clinic and the probability of such risks occurring include:

Over-the-Counter Medications

Overuse of OTC medications can produce undesirable side-effects, such as gastrointestinal disease and liver toxicity. The probability of such complications arising is dependant the dosage of medication, the length of time taking the medication, and the patient's general health

Prescription Medications

Prescription muscle relaxants and pain-killers can produce undesirable side effects and patient dependence. The risk of such complications arising is dependent upon the patient's general health, severity of the patient's discomfort, their pain tolerance, self discipline in not abusing

the medicine and proper professional supervision. Such medications generally entail very significant risks; some with rather high probabilities.

Hospitalization

If necessary, hospitalization in conjunction with other care bears the additional risk of exposure to communicable disease, iatrogenic (doctor induced) mishap, and expense. The probability of iatrogenic mishap is remote, but the expense is certain. Exposure to communicable disease is also possible with adverse results from such exposure dependent upon unknown variables.

The Risks and Dangers Attendant to Remaining Untreated:

Remaining untreated may promote the reinforcement of undesirable musculoskeletal compensations, the formation of adhesions, and reduction of mobility - all of which could contribute to more easily recurrent flare-ups of low back pain. Over time, this process may continue leading to a more complex and difficult to treat condition. This in turn would complicate treatment, making it more difficult and less effective the longer it is postponed. The probability that non-treatment will later complicate rehabilitation is relatively high.

Please be sure to discuss each of these options with your provider before initiating care to evaluate your particular risk and benefits.

References

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