

Informed Consent

Dear Patient:

Every type of health care is associated with some risk of a potential problem. This includes chiropractic health care. We want you to be informed about potential problems associated with chiropractic health care before consenting to treatment. This is a legal requirement in Iowa. This is called informed consent.

Chiropractic adjustments are the moving of bones with the doctor's hands or with the use of a mechanical device or machine. Frequently adjustments create a "pop" or "click" sound/sensation in the area being treated.

In this office we use trained staff personnel to assist the doctor with portions of your consultation, examination, x-ray taking, cold laser/ultrasound application, nutritional instruction, etc.

Stroke: Stroke means that a portion of the brain or spinal cord does not receive enough oxygen from the blood stream. The results can be temporary or permanent dysfunction of the brain, with a very rare complication of death. The literature is mixed or uncertain as to whether chiropractic adjustments are associated with stroke or not. Recent evidence suggests that it is not (2008, 2015, 2016), although the same evidence suggests that the patient may be entering the chiropractic office for neck pain/headaches or other symptoms that may in fact be a spontaneous dissection of the vertebral artery. If we think this is happening, you will be immediately referred to emergency services.

Anecdotal stories suggest that chiropractic adjustments may be associated with strokes that arise from the vertebral artery; this is because the vertebral artery is actually located inside the neck vertebrae. The adjustment that is suggested to increase the strain on the vertebral artery is called the "extension-rotation-thrust atlas adjustment." Other types of neck adjustments may also potentially be related to vertebral artery strokes, but no one is certain. It is estimated that the incidence of this type of stroke ranges between 1 per every 400,000-3,000,000 upper neck adjustments. This means that an average chiropractor would have to be in practice for hundreds of years before they would statistically be associated with a single patient stroke.

Two other potential problems that are *not* quantifiable because they are extremely rare and may have no association with chiropractic adjusting are carotid artery injury and spinal dural tear resulting in a leak of cerebral spinal fluid.

Disc Herniations: Disc herniations that create pressure on the spinal nerve or on the spinal cord are frequently successfully treated by chiropractors and chiropractic adjustments, traction, etc. This includes both in the neck and back. Yet, occasionally chiropractic treatment (adjustments, traction, etc.) will aggravate the problem and rarely surgery may become necessary for correction. These problems occur so rarely that there are no available statistics to quantify their incidence.

Cauda Equina Syndrome: Cauda Equina Syndrome occurs when a low back disc problem puts pressure on the nerves that control bowel, bladder, and sexual function. Representative symptoms include leaky bladder, or leaky bowels, or loss of sensation (numbness) around the pelvic sexual organs (the saddle area), or the inability to urinate or to start a bowel movement. Cauda Equina Syndrome is a medical emergency because the nerves that control these functions can permanently die, and those functions may be lost or compromised forever. The standard approach is to surgically decompress the nerves, and the window to do so may be as short as 12-72 hours, depending. If you have any of these symptoms, tell us immediately, and if we can't be reached, go to the emergency department.

Soft Tissue Injury: Soft tissues primarily refer to muscles and ligaments. Muscles move bones and ligaments limit joint movement. Rarely a chiropractic adjustment, traction, massage therapy, etc., may overstretch some muscle or ligament fibers. The result is a temporary increase in pain and necessary treatments for resolution, but there are no long term affects for the patient. These problems occur so rarely that there are no available statistics to quantify their incidence.

Rib and other Fractures: The ribs are found only in the thoracic spine or middle back. They extend from your back to your front chest area. Rarely a chiropractic adjustment will crack a rib bone, and this is referred to as a fracture. This occurs only on patients that have weakened bones from such things as osteoporosis. Osteoporosis can be noted on your x-rays. We adjust all patients very carefully, and especially those who have osteoporosis on their x-rays. These problems occur so rarely that there are no available statistics to quantify their incidence.

Physical Therapy Burns: Some of the machines we use generate heat. We also use both heat and ice, and recommend them for home care on occasion. Everyone's skin has different sensitivity to these modalities, and rarely, both heat or ice can burn or irritate the skin. The result is a temporary increase in pain, and there may even be some blistering of the skin. These problems occur so rarely that there are no available statistics to quantify their incidence. Never put a home ice pack directly on the skin, always have an insulating towel between.

Soreness: It is common for chiropractic adjustments, traction, massage therapy, exercise, etc. to result in a temporary increase in soreness in the region being treated. This is nearly always a temporary symptom that occurs while your body is undergoing therapeutic change. It is not dangerous, but please do tell your doctor about it.

Other Problems: There may be other problems or complications that might arise from chiropractic treatment other than those noted above. These other problems or complications occur so rarely that it is not possible to anticipate and/or explain them all in advance of treatment.

Chiropractic is a system of health care delivery, and, therefore, as with any health care delivery system we cannot promise a cure for any symptom, disease, or condition as a result of treatment in this clinic. We will always give you our best care, and if results are not acceptable, we will refer you to another provider whom we feel will assist your situation.

If you have any questions on the above, please ask your doctor. When you have a full understanding, please sign and date below.

Patient's Name Printed _____

Patient's Signature _____

Today's Date _____ / _____ / _____

Parent or Guardian Signature for Minor _____

Rapids Chiropractic Witness _____