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## Chiropractors

### **Chiropractic Physicians**

Chiropractors, also known as Doctors of Chiropractic (DC) or Chiropractic Physicians are concerned with the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of disorders of the musculoskeletal system and the effects of these disorders on the nervous system and general health.

The chiropractic profession emphasizes the natural power of the body to heal itself (homeostasis). Chiropractors counsel patients about wellness concepts such as nutrition, exercise, lifestyle changes, and stress management, but do not prescribe drugs or perform surgery. Patients requiring these interventions are referred for medical care.

Like other health practitioners, chiropractors follow a standard routine to gather the information needed for a patient's diagnosis and treatment. Chiropractors also:

- Use physical, X-ray and laboratory tests to analyze a patient's condition.
- Adjust the spine using hand and finger manipulation.
- Advise patients on treatment.
- Recommend diets and sleep habits.
- Refer patients who require drugs or surgery to other health care specialists.
- Take action to prevent skeletal deformation.
- Specialize in sports injuries, neurology, orthopedics, pediatrics, nutrition, and disorders of children, women, and the elderly or mental and nervous disorders.

### **Training and Credentials**

Chiropractors have a minimum of six years of higher education from a school accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of the [Council of Chiropractic Education](#) and have completed and passed the four-part [National Board of Chiropractic Examiners](#) examination (NBCE).

This examination covers basic sciences, clinical sciences, clinical competency, and practical skills. In Virginia, a doctor of chiropractic is licensed through the [Department of Health Professions-Board of Medicine](#) and must be renewed every two years.

## **Costs and Coverage**

[Medicare](#) Part B typically will pay 80% of the approved amount for chiropractic care. You or your Medicare supplemental insurance ([Medigap](#)) provider will be responsible to pay the remaining 20%. Please note that Medicare will review treatment claim for medical necessity, and will not pay for routine maintenance chiropractic adjustments. Your chiropractic office will be able to explain more about this.

Medicaid generally does not cover chiropractic services. Visit the [Medicaid](#) website if you would like more information about services covered.

## **Consumer Tips**

When you go to a chiropractor for your initial visit, he/she may have you complete a patient history form. This form may include questions about changes that you have noticed in your bodily functions and work effectiveness. You will also answer questions about why you are coming to a chiropractor. As part of this first visit, you may also learn about the concept of chiropractic care, the basics of what chiropractors do and an overview on what instruments will be used during the examination. This visit may include:

- X-rays of your spine
- A spinal screening where the chiropractor feels your spine
- A posture check

These findings are then integrated into a treatment plan for you.

To obtain additional information about chiropractic medicine go to the [American Chiropractic Association \(ACA\)](#) website.

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