

Your first visit to Wokingham Chiropractic Centre

What lies ahead?

All our chiropractors have all graduated from an internationally-accredited college after a minimum of four years full-time training- and all are registered with the General Chiropractic Council (the body which administers the Chiropractors Act 1994).

The first thing your chiropractor will do, after greeting you, will be to give you an opportunity to discuss the reasons for you being here. You will be asked for a great deal of information- not just about the pain or complaint that may have brought you, but about your past health history. Some of these questions may appear irrelevant, but they are, nevertheless, extremely important in order to obtain an overall health picture, and to ensure that you do not need to be referred to your GP or another healthcare practitioner.

Your chiropractor will keep all these details confidential. No-one else will be given access to your notes without your permission.

After your case history has been obtained, your chiropractor will perform an examination to confirm any early ideas he or she may have about your problem. Female patients are always offered a gown to wear for this part of the consultation – as well as any treatment sessions afterwards. This examination will concentrate on your musculoskeletal system (the spine, arms and legs) - but it may also be necessary to examine your heart, lungs and abdomen. Again, this is performed in order to eliminate any other causes of your problem and is quite a normal procedure in a chiropractor's clinic. However, it is not usual for a chiropractor to examine intimate areas- if it is felt that you would benefit from such an examination; you will be referred to your GP for this.

Use of x-ray investigations and other tests

X-rays may also be taken- but decisions will be made in consultation with you before any such procedure is undertaken. There is a small risk with excessive radiation, so **no** x-ray procedure is undertaken lightly. At all times your chiropractor will weigh the risks against the benefits and advise you accordingly. Typical patients who may require x-ray are those who have had recent injuries, older patients where there may be a question relating to bone density, unusual examination findings or a history of other diseases.

The first treatment visit

After the initial consultation is over, treatment may be offered immediately. However, it is not unusual for this to be delayed for a day or two if your chiropractor needs to obtain further information from your GP, view some hospital x-rays, or perform blood or urine tests.

At your first treatment visit – before treatment starts- your chiropractor will discuss with you the results of the examination. You will be told – in very clear and simple language – what is wrong with you and what can be done about it. You will probably be advised at this point of **your** role in the treatment plan- of any lifestyle changes that would be beneficial, exercises that might help and perhaps some dietary changes. There are many suggestions that your chiropractor might make in order to **help you to help yourself**. A large part of 'getting better' is up to you, so please follow any instructions and advice carefully and completely

You will also be advised of all charges relating to future care. It would certainly be appropriate, at this point, for you to be told of any likelihood of a recurrence of your

problem and the possibility of the need for any ongoing care. This is not an unusual situation with patients who have had serious injuries – as well as those who have had long term problems as a result of wear and tear to the joints.

What can I expect during treatment?

Chiropractic care mainly involves treatment by manipulation to the joints of the spine or other areas of the body. Most often, this involves a short impulse to the joint, bringing an easing of symptoms and sometimes being accompanied by a popping or cracking sound. The 'crack' is thought to be the sound of bubbles of gas popping in the fluid of the joint as the pressure is released. This is called an 'adjustment'

Most of us are a little worried whenever we encounter a new treatment- you are not alone if you are a little apprehensive at this point. Before **any** procedure is undertaken your chiropractor will **completely** inform you of what to expect when you receive your first 'adjustment'

Generally, a chiropractic adjustment does not hurt – although there may be some minor short-term discomfort which quickly passes for most patients. You will find that ensuing treatments are much more pleasant – this will certainly be aided by your feeling more at ease with your chiropractor, as well as starting to feel that your symptoms are subsiding.

Apart from the adjustment, your chiropractor may use a wide variety of techniques- including muscle work, the use of ice or heat and exercises –amongst many other options. If you have questions about any of these procedures simply ask your chiropractor for an explanation.

Are there any risks?

We all know that there are risks when attending **any** healthcare professional; but, generally, these risks and reactions are much less than with many other options for your problem.

Like most forms of treatment, symptoms may take some time to ease, there being no instant 'cure'.

Some patients may experience temporary soreness over the areas being treated-with redness or even bruising of the skin if deep-tissue work has been administered. Spinal problems may appear to flare-up in the early stages of treatment and where an underlying inflammation is already present, your condition may initially seem to worsen.

Some people experience feelings of tiredness or fatigue following treatment. This tiredness is usually gone within a few hours or after a night's rest.

Following treatment to the joints of the neck, some aching of the neck and shoulder muscles may be noticed for a short while.

Serious side effects are extremely uncommon.

Manipulation of the neck by a skilled healthcare professional, such as a chiropractor, is very safe.

Some patients may experience side effects following treatment. These may include a temporary increase in the original symptoms, local soreness in the area treated, headache or transient light headedness. These effects usually disappear within a few hours or a few days at most.

Your chiropractor will talk you through the treatment beforehand so that you understand the potential risks as well as benefits before agreeing to treatment.

There have been reported cases of stroke associated with common, everyday neck movements as well as neck manipulation. The chance of stroke after manipulation is very rare at about one in a million (0.0001%). However, no cause and effect has been established and a similar association was observed amongst patients seeing their G.P. If you have certain underlying health conditions you may be at increased risk of stroke so it is important to tell your chiropractor about your complete health and medication history.

Sometimes, neck pain and headaches can be symptoms of stroke but this is very rare. If you are having any unusual symptoms such as problems with **vision, swallowing, speaking, walking, dizziness, fainting, nausea or numbness please tell your chiropractor and seek advice from the A&E department of the local hospital.**

Lumbar disc problems can be very painful and worrying but are quite common and usually respond well to conservative care.

Terms such as prolapsed disc, herniated disc, protruded disc, disc bulge or slipped disc are often used to describe disc problems.

Symptoms in the leg are sometimes called sciatica or a trapped nerve.

In rare cases, disc material can prolapse and compress nerves that control the pelvic organs and legs. **This is known as Cauda Equina syndrome and is regarded as a medical emergency.**

Immediate advice should be sought from the A&E department of the local hospital.

Symptoms indicative of Cauda Equina syndrome can **include loss of control of bowel or bladder function, numbness of buttocks and between the legs, changed sexual function and progressive weakness in the legs and feet.**

Your chiropractor will, of course, be more than happy to discuss fully all concerns you may have regarding your treatment, giving an honest appraisal of your particular case.