

## Informed Consent

Every type of health care is associated with some risks of potential problems. 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 **Nebraska**.

Chiropractic adjustments are the moving of bones with the doctor's hands or with the use of a mechanical device or machine (drop table). 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-rays, physical therapy application, traction, massage therapy, exercise instruction, etc. Occasionally when your doctor is unavailable, another clinic doctor will treat you on that day.

**Neck Artery Dissection and Stroke:** Dissection is when the lining of a neck artery breaks down. This might happen spontaneously or from an injury or from a trivial movement (hair shampooing, checking traffic, looking up, etc.). Dissections tend to cause neck pain and/or headache. Dissections may form a clot that can dislodge and interfere with brain blood flow. If that happens, it is called a 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, 2019), although the same evidence often 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 a neck artery. There are **no** in-the-office tests to diagnose a spontaneous neck artery dissection (2020), but they might be detectable with advanced imaging (CT/MRI, etc.). If we think you may be suffering from a spontaneous neck artery dissection and/or associated stroke, you will be immediately referred to emergency services.

Anecdotal cases suggest that chiropractic adjustments may be associated with dissection and/or stroke that arise from the vertebral artery; this is because the vertebral artery is 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." We do not do this type adjustment on patients. 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 complication ranges between 1 per every 400,000-10,000,000 neck adjustments (2004). A large 10-year study estimated an incidence of 1 per 5.85 million neck adjustments, equivalent to 1,430 years if clinical practice (2001). If you experience any of the "5 **Ds** And 3 **Ns**" (on a following separate page) before, during or after an adjustment, tell us immediately, and if we can't be reached, go to the emergency department immediately. Also, please read, fill out, and sign **Stroke Risk Factors**.

Three other potential problems that are not quantifiable because they are extremely rare and may have no association with chiropractic adjusting are carotid artery injury, spinal dural leak of cerebral spinal fluid, and bleeding in the coverings around the spinal column (dural hematoma).

**Disc Herniations:** Both neck and back disc herniations may create pressure on the spinal nerve or on the spinal cord. They are frequently successfully treated by chiropractors and chiropractic adjustments, traction, etc. Occasionally chiropractic treatment (adjustments, traction, etc.) may aggravate a disc/nerve problem and rarely surgery may become necessary for correction.

**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 start/stop urination or to start/stop 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 immediately.

**Soft Tissue Injury:** Soft tissues primarily refer to muscles and ligaments. Rarely, chiropractic care 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 effects for the patient.

**Rib and other Fractures:** Rarely a chiropractic adjustment may crack a rib bone, and this is referred to as a fracture. We adjust all patients very carefully, and especially those who have known osteoporosis. Other fracture locations are extremely rare but possible, especially in those aged over 65 years and/or on steroid drugs.

**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. Never put an ice pack directly on the skin, always have an insulating towel between. We use cold (low-level) laser therapy which produces no heat and cannot result in burn.

**Soreness:** It is common for chiropractic care 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 for additional diagnostics or to another provider whom we feel will assist your situation.

Alternatives to chiropractic care include: do nothing, drugs, surgery, acupuncture, massage, etc. Risks from these procedures should be discussed with that particular provider.

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Today's Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Patient's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent or Guardian Signature For Minor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Doctor's Signature Verifying Discussion

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date