

# Alpine Chiropractic

## 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.

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 massage therapy. Occasionally, when your doctor is unavailable, another clinic doctor will treat you on that day.

**Neck Artery Dissector 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 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 the 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 of 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 stroke ranges between 1 per every 400,000-3,000,000 neck adjustments. If you experience any of the "5 Ds and 3 Ns" before, during, or after an adjustment, tell us immediately, and if we can't be reached, go to the emergency department immediately. Two other potential problems that are not quantifiable because they are extremely rare and have no association with chiropractic adjusting are carotid artery injury, and spinal dural tear resulting in a leak of cerebral spinal fluid.

**Disc Herniations:** Both back and neck disc herniations may create pressure on the spinal nerve 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 area (the saddle area), or the inability 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. 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. 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 effects for the patient.

**Rib and other Fractures:** Rarely a chiropractic adjustment will 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 those aged over 65 years and/or on steroid drugs.

**Heat and Ice:** We recommend both heat and ice for home care on occasion. Everyone's skin has different sensitivities, and rarely, both heat and 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.

**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 the chiropractic treatment other than those noted above. The 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 healthcare delivery, and therefore, as with any healthcare 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. Alternatives to chiropractic care include do nothing, drugs, surgery, acupuncture, massage, etc. Risks from these procedures should be addressed with that provider.

**Massage:** I understand the massage given here is for the purpose of relief from muscular tension or spasm, and for increasing circulation. Understand the massage practitioner does not diagnose illness, disease, or other physical or mental disorder. As such, the therapist does not prescribe medical treatment or pharmaceuticals, nor perform spinal manipulations. I understand massage is not a substitute for medical examination and diagnosis, and that it is recommended to see physician for any physical ailments I may have. Because the massage practitioner must be aware of existing conditions, I have stated all my known medical conditions and take it upon myself to keep the practitioner updated on my physical, mental, and emotional health.

I have read and fully understand the above statements, and therefore, accept chiropractic care on this basis.

I agree that financial responsibility for my treatment is ultimately my own.

I agree that a fee may be charged if I cancel my appointment less than 24 hours before it begins.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### **\*Consent to evaluate and adjust a minor child\***

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ D.O.B. \_\_\_\_\_

I, the above signed, being the parent or legal guardian of \_\_\_\_\_ have fully read the above Informed Consent and hereby grant permission for my child to receive chiropractic care.