

# Be Well Informed



Chiropractic Examinations for Back Pain

## What to Expect

DiDomenico  
Chiropractic

**In many regards, a chiropractic examination is very similar to standard examination procedures administered by all health care providers. With that said, how chiropractors examine the structure and function of the spine and then determine specific chiropractic treatments separates chiropractic care from other disciplines.**

#### **Chiropractic Exam of Lower Back Pain.**

An initial chiropractic exam for back pain will typically have three parts: a consultation, case history, and physical examination.

#### **Consultation.**

The patient meets with the chiropractor and provides a brief synopsis of his or her lower back pain, such as:

- Duration and frequency of symptoms
- Description of the symptoms (e.g. burning, aching)
- Areas of pain
- What makes the pain feel better (e.g. sitting, stretching)
- What makes the pain feel worse (e.g. standing, lifting)

#### **Case History.**

The chiropractor identifies the area(s) of complaint and the nature of the back pain by asking questions and learning more about different areas of the patient's history, including:

- Family history
- Past history of other treatments (chiropractic, osteopathic, medical and other)
- Occupational history
- Exercise and other physical activity

#### **Physical Examination.**

A chiropractor may utilize a variety of methods to determine the spinal segments that require chiropractic treatments, including but not limited to static and motion palpation techniques determining spinal segments that are hypo-mobile (restricted in their movement) or fixated. Depending on the results of the above examination, a chiropractor may use additional diagnostic tests, such as an X-Ray or MRI.

Many chiropractors utilize a holistic, biomechanical concept of treating the bipedal structure in its entirety, in an attempt to balance the structure from the feet upward.

Chiropractors are typically trained in multiple methods of assessing lower back pain, including:

**Evaluation and management services.**<sup>1</sup> Chiropractors are trained in examining the joints, bones, muscles and tendons of the spine, head, extremities and other areas of the body with the purpose of noting any misalignment, tenderness, asymmetry, defects or other problems.

**Neurologic and other common physical examination procedures.**<sup>1</sup> Chiropractors are trained to perform a variety of neurologic tests (nerve root compression/tension, motor strength, coordination, deep tendon and pathological reflexes, etc.) and are skilled in performing orthopedic, cardiovascular and many other common examinations.

**Specialized assessment.**<sup>1</sup> Chiropractors are trained to assess range of motion, stability, muscle strength, muscle tone and other assessments with the lower back.

**Common diagnostic studies.**<sup>1</sup> Chiropractors are trained in use of diagnostic studies and tools such as X-Ray, MRI, CT scan, laboratory diagnostics and neurodiagnostics.

Source: Spine-Health, 2014

References: <sup>1</sup>Globe G, Morris C, Whalen W et al., "Chiropractic Management of Low Back Disorders: Report from a Consensus Process," *Journal of Manipulative and Physiological Therapeutics* November/December 2008: 651-658.

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