



Halifax Chiropractic Clinic

[About](#) | [Doctors](#) | [Clinic](#) | [Exercises](#) | [Seasonal Tips](#) | [Articles](#) | [Links](#)

Have You Thought About Chiropractic? by Dr. Brian S. Seaman, DC, FCCSS(C), FICC

The 'Bad' News

It is generally accepted that 80% of people experience at least one episode of low back pain during their lives. The 'good' news – Chiropractic care has been shown to be effective and cost-effective as well as having a high level of patient satisfaction.

So what to do?

Chances are, many of you who are reading this have experienced, or are experiencing, low back pain. Sometimes you can also have leg pain (referred to as "sciatica") which radiates down to the calf, ankle or foot.

Research also reports that at least 85-90% of lower back pain cases are termed "mechanical". This means it is caused by the joints of your back (the spine) moving improperly (too much motion) or not at all (hypomobilities). Another factor can be muscle weakness or muscle imbalances.

Can my muscles cause lower back pain?

Yes – as an example, weak abdominal muscles can cause the posture of your back to become more lordotic (often referred to as a "sway back") which places more stress on the joints of the spine (called 'facets'). This can lead to the joints moving improperly or becoming restricted in movement which can result in mechanical type lower back pain.

Other sources of lower back pain can include the discs, nerves, joint capsule (the structure around the joint), arthritis or degenerative changes.

What can I do?

First and foremost, is to have your lower back examined to determine the potential cause of your condition. Canada's 6,500 chiropractors evaluate back pain on a daily basis and have long been considered the most qualified of all health care professionals in the field of spinal manipulation. This issue has been dealt with in the literature over the years including a report years ago by the New Zealand Commission of Inquiry into Chiropractic (1979).



concluded that “Chiropractors carry out spinal diagnosis and therapy at a very advanced and refined level. They are the only health practitioners who are necessarily given the education and training to carry out manual therapy”.

Although you do not require a medical referral to consult with a chiropractor, an increasing number of family physicians (your ‘GPs’) who refer to chiropractors on a private basis. However you may require a referral for the purpose of reimbursement on a private health insurance plan.

In addition to your ‘GP’, you should also check with your family, friends and there are likely a number of them who are chiropractic patients.

What will a chiropractor do?

A chiropractor will review the history of your lower back pain, examine the area, and decide if imaging studies are necessary (ie. x-rays), and decide if further investigation is warranted. Once all the information has been gathered, your chiropractor will explain the factors contributing to your problem, what the problem is (ie. diagnosis or clinical impression) and make appropriate recommendations. These recommendations may include:

- Chiropractic treatment (spinal adjustments, soft tissue therapy techniques and modalities such as ultrasound or muscle stimulation).
- Rehabilitative exercises (ie. core stabilization exercises).
- Lifestyle and activity modifications.
- Ergonomic revisions at your desk or computer (whether it be work or at home).

What should I expect?

Your response to treatment will depend on your particular case and would be determined by you and your chiropractor.

It will also be very important for you to follow all the chiropractor’s recommendations. For example, you have to floss, brush and rinse between dental appointments to maintain oral health, you also have to do the exercises that are prescribed to you, in order to strengthen your back and increase your flexibility.

How can I get more information?

Check out the website at the Halifax Chiropractic Clinic (www.halifaxchiroprax.com) or the website of the Nova Scotia College of Chiropractors (www.chiropractors.ns.ca).

The national chiropractic association (Canadian Chiropractic Association) is also [Chiropractic Canada](http://www.chiropracticcanada.ca).

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