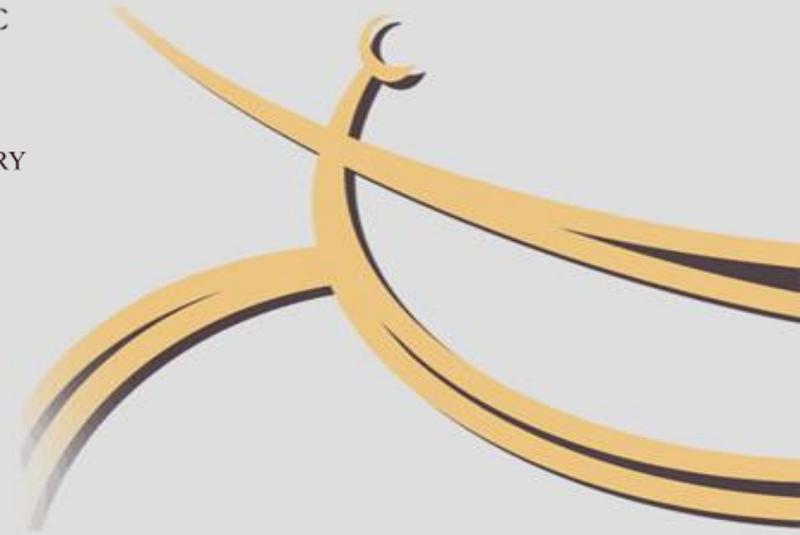




CHIROPRACTIC
Health
CENTRE
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CHOOSING A CHIROPRACTOR

By

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CHOOSING A CHIROPRACTOR IN ALBERTA

Choosing a chiropractor who is right for you is a very personal choice: the bottom line will always come down to how you feel about your experience with one.

What I can tell you is that - as a member of the Canadian Chiropractic Exam board and a complaints investigator for the Alberta College & Association of Chiropractors - there are certain key aspects to chiropractic that are very important in the chiropractor/patient relationship.

I've written this report to help you identify what aspects you feel are important to you, so that you may make an educated decision when choosing a chiropractor in Alberta.

You'll learn:

- 1 All About Chiropractic and Chiropractors**
What Chiropractors do, how they maintain good standing with the ACAC, what you should expect by way of service, fees and treatments.
- 2 5 Things to Expect from ANY Chiropractor**
Whether you've just started to see a new chiropractor, or you've been seeing the same one for years, there are certain things that are standard in practice.
- 3 Questions to Ask Your Chiropractor of Choice**
There are different kinds of chiropractic care you can come across. We've put together questions you can ask to be clear on what you'll be getting.
- 4 Popular Myths about Chiropractic Care**
Know the facts on what is and isn't true to chiropractic care.

ALL ABOUT CHIROPRACTIC & CHIROPRACTORS

What do chiropractors do?

Doctors of chiropractic are experts in the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of conditions and disorders related to the spine, nervous system and musculoskeletal system; this includes the back, neck, head, pelvis, and extremity joints.

These kinds of conditions and disorders can present themselves as:

- Chronic or acute pain/discomfort
- Strains & sprains
- Injury from repetitive use
- Limited range of motion in the back, shoulder, neck or limbs

These conditions and disorders often stem from:

- Sports injuries
- Work accidents
- Motor vehicle accidents
- Daily activities that put unconscious stress on the body, including sleeping or computer work
- A fall or odd movement

Chiropractors work with you to resolve pain, discomfort and restricted range of motion. They are trained to create rehabilitation plans and help you with injury prevention. Sometimes this includes referrals to other therapeutic options.

You'll often hear people refer to chiropractic as the 'cracking of bones' – but what it actually is, is a hands-on adjustment: a gentle, carefully directed movement.

Other therapies chiropractors might use include:

- Graston Technique ®
- Active Release Techniques ® (ART)
- Acupuncture
- Shockwave Therapy
- Ice and Heat Therapy
- Soft Tissue Manipulation
- Ultrasound Therapy
- Massage Therapy
- Active Isolated Stretching

Remember that not everyone is a candidate for chiropractic care. There are a number of tests done at the first assessment to be able to identify whether chiropractic would be beneficial and safe for you.

What does it take to be a Chiropractor in Alberta?

In Canada, chiropractors must complete a minimum seven years of specific postsecondary education from an accredited chiropractic college. When chiropractors graduate, they complete a 4,500 hour classroom and clinical program (this usually takes 4 - 5 years).

The ACAC (Alberta College and Association of Chiropractors) regulates all Doctors of Chiropractic in Alberta. This is so that standards of care can be maintained, the public is protected, and accountability is ensured among all practices established within the province.

The ACAC also issues yearly licensing once a chiropractor successfully passes his/her national board exams. This license can only be obtained by furthering professional competency by taking certain seminars and courses throughout the year.

What can Chiropractors charge for care?

Most chiropractors charge approximately \$100 for the first visit, and following treatments are anywhere between \$40 and \$60. These charges will vary from chiropractor to chiropractor – and other therapies can vary in cost, so be sure to ask about fees when you first call to make your appointment.

If you have extended health care, your plan might include coverage for chiropractic treatments. It is your responsibility to find out if you're covered and for how much.

If you suffer an injury in a motor vehicle accident, coverage is also available from your auto insurance provider at no charge.



The Alberta College & Association of Chiropractors publishes a fee schedule that acts as a guideline for what brackets are appropriate for different services.

[Click here to view it.](#)

5 THINGS TO EXPECT FROM ANY CHIROPRACTOR

Whether it's your first visit, or you've been seeing a chiropractor for years, you should expect the following 5 things with ANY chiropractor and at ANY time:

1. Your chiropractor should be documenting your visits very carefully: case history, physical exam findings, written diagnosis – including your concerns, visit findings, and even the goals you've established as part of your treatment plan. You should always be able to request a copy of your file without issue.
2. All chiropractic sessions should be confidential, and the option to have your treatment performed in a private room should always be available to you.
3. Constant dialogue: there should be open communication between yourself and your chiropractor before, during and after your visit. Any concerns should be given full attention if and when they are brought up. You should also be able to connect directly with your doctor – at your request – either by email, phone, or meeting. You should also always be given options for care, and the opportunity to be an active participant in the decisions regarding your chiropractic treatment plan.
4. Your sessions should always feel relevant to the problem that you've presented, as well as respectful and engaging. At no time during your visits should you feel pressured, rushed, or that the information given to you is misleading. You should also feel comfortable refusing consent to treatment at any time – even while a treatment is taking place.
5. There should never be a suggestion that long-term care contracts are necessary / the only way to maintain proper health. Your chiropractor's aim should be to help you achieve results in the shortest time frame possible, and always be comfortable referring you to other health care practitioners or another chiropractor.

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR CHIROPRACTOR

The first thing to consider when deciding what kind of chiropractic care you're looking for is what kind of experience would best suit your availability and schedule, your expectations for what kind of relationship you'd like to build with your chiropractor, and what of treatment options you'd like to have readily available for you.

To better understand what kind of practice it is, ask the following:

1. How long are the appointments?

Your appointment shouldn't feel rushed, despite the fact that the length of one can vary from a few minutes to an hour. Ask how long the typical follow up appointment is, remembering that some chiropractors take more time with their patients than others.

2. What treatments do you provide on-site?

Some practices focus only on manual manipulations and basic heat/ice therapy, while others can offer a wide variety of options such as:

- Graston Technique ®
- Active Release Techniques ® (ART)
- Acupuncture
- Ultrasound Therapy
- Massage Therapy
- Active Isolated Stretching
- Shockwave Therapy

3. How do you determine how many visits I'll need?

You will always want to choose a chiropractor whose aim is to help relieve your pain in as few visits as possible, and who will continue to evaluate your progress during every visit so that you avoid going in more often than you need to.

4. Will you show me ways of preventing what you are treating?

When a chiropractor's goal is to help you achieve pain relief and develop an easy maintenance plan that you can continue to follow on your own, you'll find that the benefits of the care you've received is prolonged and the risks or re-injuring yourself are low.

5. How will I be billed?

You'll want to ask your chiropractor how billing works. Do they accept direct billing? Is it at the end of every appointment? Is it a fixed price, or will the price vary depending on the type of treatment given?

When it comes to the treatment plan you develop for yourself with the help of your chiropractor, subsequent visits may be necessary and some chiropractors offer pre-paid care packages: it is stated in the Chiropractic Patient Charter of Rights that you are to receive a refund of any fees paid in advance for care you have not claimed within seven days of a formal request.

POPULAR MYTHS ABOUT CHIROPRACTIC CARE

We've heard these sayings before – but did you know that some of them are myths?

1. Once you get a chiropractic treatment, you always have to go back

When Consumers' Report reviewed the top treatments for back and neck pain in September of 2011, chiropractic outperformed all other treatments: it is no secret that it's an excellent means of pain relief. Does this mean that you have to always go back once you start?

The simple, quick answer: no.

Recommending that patients return for periodic visits is no different than dentists recommending monthly to yearly visits to help prevent cavities and gum disease. After resolving your pain issues, most chiropractors will give you the option to receive periodic chiropractic care to minimize the likelihood of future recurrences or development of new problems.

But it's still just an option which you can choose to take advantage of, or not!

2. Chiropractors CRACK bones

Chiropractors do not crack bones, they don't crack joints: in fact, no joints in the body touch each other. What actually happens is this: between the bones that make up a joint, you will find an envelope with fluid in it. When a chiropractor gently shifts a joint back to where it's supposed to be, the envelope releases gas that's in the joint fluid, and that creates the sound you hear.

3. Chiropractors don't work on soft tissue – only joints

While chiropractors are definitely known for manual manipulations/adjustments, they can also receive special certificates/training to provide very effective treatment for a huge variety of different soft tissue disorders.

Therapies like Graston Technique ®, Active Release Therapies ® and Medical Contemporary Acupuncture are all modules that chiropractors can choose to get certified for. This provides them with even greater tools in helping conditions of the joints of the extremities, like the ankle, knee and shoulder.

4. Manual adjustments hurt

While some adjustments require quite a bit of pressure be applied to a certain area of your body (which can produce some discomfort if you're sensitive from the pain you've been experiencing), many patients have described receiving an adjustment as "getting instant relief the moment it's done!"

And last but not least...

We wanted to thank you for taking the time to download and review this guide. It's our hope that you've found it genuinely helpful and that it has equipped you with an understanding of what to expect from Chiropractors in Alberta.

As chiropractors working under the Alberta College and Association of Chiropractors, we all follow standards of practice that we honor diligently. With knowledge of these practices, you can be sure that you are getting the standard of practice you deserve.

Sincerely,

Dr. Jamila Abdulla, DC

& the entire team at the Chiropractic Health Centre