

# OPTIMAL HEALTH UNIVERSITY™

Presented by Katie Gravesen, DC

## Save Money With Chiropractic Care

*In a world of rising health care costs, back pain can be an expensive problem. It is the second most common cause of physician visits and hospitalizations. Patients spend over \$100 billion annually treating back pain. Diagnostic tests, medications and surgeries account for much of the expenditure. Plus, back pain is often a chronic condition requiring long-term care — and long-term expense.*

*But back pain doesn't have to break the bank. A review of 26 studies published in the European Spine Journal confirms what patients of Dr. Gravesen have known for years — that chiropractic is a cost-effective therapy for back pain. Dr. Gravesen runs the numbers on the different approaches to back pain and explains why the more economical option is also the best for your health.*



### What Is Chiropractic?

Hippocrates wrote that “the natural healing force within each one of us is the greatest force in getting well.” Chiropractic is a revolutionary approach to wellness that focuses on tapping into the body’s ability to heal itself without drugs.

Chiropractors focus on correcting dysfunctional areas in the spine called **vertebral subluxations**. These misalignments of the vertebrae (spinal bones) are quite common and can cause musculoskeletal pain. Using gentle maneuvers called **chiropractic adjustments**, Dr. Gravesen corrects vertebral subluxations, relieving pain

and often improving range of motion in affected areas.

In addition to musculoskeletal pain, chiropractic adjustments can ease a variety of conditions related to the nervous system. The core of the nervous system is the spinal cord. If the vertebrae that surround the spinal cord are out of alignment, diverse symptoms may result — from digestive complaints to allergies and asthma to infant colic.

Dr. Gravesen also advises patients regarding other lifestyle changes to support optimal wellness, including nutrition, exercise, stress-reduction and ergonomics. These components of well-being strengthen overall health and, in turn, the ability to fend off disease and recover quickly from injury.

### Lower Cost of Care

Think that chiropractic care comes with an elite price tag? Not so. In fact, chiropractic is often considerably more affordable than other avenues of care.

A two-year study followed patients

with back pain and tracked their health care costs through insurance claims. The cost of chiropractic care was a whopping 60 percent lower per case than other types of specialty care for back pain (*J Manipulative Physiol Ther* 2009;32:734-9).

Another similar study looked at insurance claims for a group of patients who had equivalent coverage and co-pays for both medical doctors and doctors of chiropractic. Patients who sought care for low-back pain had nearly 40 percent lower cost per episode of care from chiropractors compared with medical doctors (*J Manipulative Physiol Ther* 2010;33:640-3).

### Fewer Procedures, Less Recurrence

Why does chiropractic care cost less on average than conventional medical care? One major difference is in the number of costly procedures medical doctors often perform.

A research review of 33 studies of primary medical care for back pain reveals some disturbing trends. Medical doctors prescribed opioids — a highly addictive class of painkillers — for back pain at levels above clinical guidelines. They also exceeded guidelines for X-ray use (*Br J Gen Pract* 2008;58:790-7).



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Other studies show an excessive use of other expensive imaging procedures, such as computed tomography (CT) and magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) among medical patients with back pain.

On the other hand, patients who turn to chiropractic care for their back pain spend significantly less money on unnecessary procedures and surgeries (*J Manipulative Physiol Ther* 2005; 28:564-9).

Furthermore, back pain patients have fewer recurrences of disability when they rely on chiropractic. Researchers reviewed a year's worth of data on 894 patients who filed workers' compensation claims for on-the-job back injuries. The claimants who received care from a chiropractor were less likely to endure later disability, compared with those treated by a medical doctor or a physical therapist (*JOEM* 2011;Epub).

In other words, choosing chiropractic care for back pain makes financial sense in two ways: it saves up-front costs and it reduces lost workdays.

### **Better Wellness Means More Savings**

The chiropractic approach is unique in its focus on maintaining wellness with sound preventive care.



This comprehensive approach includes chiropractic adjustments, nutrition counseling, exercise advice and stress management. By achieving better health through the **chiropractic lifestyle**, patients are often pleasantly surprised to find that their overall health care costs decline.

A particularly telling large-scale analysis included four years of health insurance claim data for more than 700,000 individuals who had chiropractic coverage as part of their plan plus 1 million who had no chiropractic benefit. The plan members with chiropractic coverage spent on average 12 percent less on total health care annually (*Arch Intern Med* 2004;164: 1985-92).

With savings like these, it is not surprising that those with a low to moderate income are likely to have more chiropractic visits (*J Altern Complement Med* 2010;16:995-1001).

### **Proven Effective**

Any wise consumer knows that cheaper is not always better — something that doesn't work is often more expensive in the long run. But you won't get a "lemon" when you choose chiropractic care. Study after study shows that chiropractic is effective (*Ann Intern Med* 2007;147:492-504).

In fact, chiropractic often yields superior results to conventional medicine. When scientists surveyed 2,780 back pain patients who had seen medical doctors or doctors of chiropractic, the chiropractic patients reported more reduction of pain, less disability and greater satisfaction with their care (*J Manipulative Physiol Ther* 2005;28: 555-63).



Chiropractic also diminishes the need for costly pain medication, which carries risks of adverse effects and is only minimally effective. On the other hand, in a survey of over 2,000 adults, 61 percent of those using chiropractic care reported that it had been "very helpful" in relieving back pain, while only 27 percent of conventional medicine patients said the same of their treatment (*Spine* 2003;28:292-7).

### **Take the Next Step**

Now that you know about the affordable and effective alternative to conventional medical care, don't let the sagging economy keep you from reaching optimal health. Call our office today to schedule a chiropractic evaluation. Your body — and your wallet — will thank you.

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