

ACUTE LOW BACK PROBLEMS IN ADULTS

Doctors of Chiropractic and their patients have always known that conservative care is the best way to treat acute low back problems. Now, based on an exhaustive study of the current research on treating low back pain, a group of medical specialists empaneled by the federal Agency for Health Care Policy and Research (AHCPR) has endorsed conservative care for this widespread and often debilitating condition.

In its clinical practice guideline, Acute Low Back Problems in Adults, the panel recommends treating the pain of most acute low back problems with spinal manipulation in the first 4 weeks of symptoms, and/or nonprescription pain killers in conjunction with mild exercise such as walking or swimming, followed by conditioning exercises in about two weeks. They stress the importance of resuming normal daily activities as quickly as possible and found that more than 4 days of bed rest can be counterproductive. Because chiropractic health care is dedicated to helping the body heal itself by using spinal manipulation, you may not need even the mild over-the-counter medications suggested by the guideline. Doctors of Chiropractic are trained to diagnose your condition and, should you be one of the rare cases that will not respond to this conservative regime, can refer you to the appropriate health care professional. In addition, your Doctor of Chiropractic can help you to develop an exercise program that will help you to recover quickly without further injury.

A study by the prestigious RAND Corporation confirmed that chiropractors perform 94% of the spinal manipulation in the U.S. with osteopaths delivering just 4% and general practitioners and orthopedic surgeons performing the remaining 2%. Chiropractors have always been and will always be committed to healing through spinal manipulation.

The AHCPR felt that it was important to create guidelines for acute low back pain for these reasons:

Frequency of low back problems. Most people experience low back problems during their lifetime; national statistics indicate that 15-30% of the population is affected each year.

High cost in financial and human terms. Estimates of the total annual loss due to back pain in the U.S. ranges from \$20 to \$50 billion when lost productivity is taken into consideration; the impact of back pain on the lives of those who suffer and their families is impossible to measure.

Questionable quality of treatment. Increasing evidence indicates that many patients are receiving care that is inappropriate or less than optimal.

Growing amount of scientific research available. Because of the efforts of organizations who fund scientific research, like the Foundation for Chiropractic Education and Research, there is now sufficient scientific evidence for conclusions about the efficacy and safety of treatment methods.

These highlights taken from the Executive Summary of the AHCPR's clinical practice guideline, Acute Low Back Problems in Adults, are of special interest to patients who are interested in spinal manipulation as performed by a skilled Doctor of Chiropractic. If you suffer from low back problems that keep you from performing your normal daily activities, remember the advice of the AHCPR: conservative care is almost always the safest, most effective solution. You and your Doctor of Chiropractic can work together to help your body heal naturally and follow the recommendations of the AHCPR guideline panel.

**Our purpose is to educate and adjust families toward optimal health
with natural chiropractic care.**