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## **Three Commonly Heard Misconceptions About Chiropractic** **By: Dr. Stephen O'Neil**

### 1. Chiropractors Are Not Real Doctors

Doctors of Chiropractic (D.C.) comprise the second largest health care profession with over 60,000 practitioners in the U.S. and Canada. They earn the title doctor along with Medical Doctors (M.D.), Doctors of Osteopathy (D.D.) and Dentists (D.D.S.)

The educational process leading to the title Doctor of Chiropractic is similar to that of an M.D. A chiropractic student is required to complete three to four years of pre-chiropractic studies at university, followed by four years of chiropractic education. The last year of chiropractic study is spent in both the classroom as well as in the clinical setting as a chiropractic intern. During this time the student examines, diagnoses and treats patients under the supervision of a licenced D.C. Upon completion of the degree, the student is required to pass a series of Board exams to obtain licensure. Chiropractic students actually accumulate more course hours in anatomy, physiology, biomechanics, neurology, and nutrition than a general practitioner in the medical field.

### 2. Chiropractic Care is Dangerous

The safety of chiropractic care has been well documented in professional journals of all kinds. Serious side effects of chiropractic manipulative therapy occurs approximately one out of every one to three million adjustments. Chiropractic is very safe when these numbers are compared to medical research on the safety of prescription drugs. The Journal of the American Medical Association (April 1998) reported that 100,000 people in the U.S. die each year due to the effects of prescription drugs prescribed by their M.D. The article continues to say 51% of approved drugs have serious side effects not detected in testing prior to approval. In addition, each year 1.5 million people are injured so severely by prescription drugs that they require hospitalization. These statistics make prescription drugs the fourth leading cause of death in the United States. Chiropractic is a safe alternative to many prescription medications and over the counter drugs.

### 3. You Have To Keep Going For The Rest Of Your Life

There is nothing that says when you see a chiropractor once, you have to go forever. However, if you understand how chiropractic works, it becomes obvious that regular visits to the chiropractor to maintain spinal integrity and nervous system function should be part of a healthy lifestyle. Chiropractic adjustments retrain spinal muscles to maintain the proper alignment of the vertebrae - much like orthodontics do for the teeth. The time required for correction of spinal and nervous system dysfunction varies according to the condition of the patient's spine, their job and other lifestyle activities.

Spinal adjustments are much like the regular maintenance required on a vehicle. It is recommended you change your oil every 5000 kilometres or so, for as long as you own your car. Some people drive the 5000 kilometres in a month, some do so in a week. The same goes for caring for your spine. Some people stress their bodies to the max and may require weekly adjustments while others may need to come in one time per month. It is the constant stress in our lives that cause detrimental changes to take place in our bodies. Yes, this care should be part of a lifestyle choice for as long as you own the Body. Remember, "an ounce of prevention, is worth a pound of cure". Don't let your car's engine break down before changing the oil. See your chiropractor for a tune-up soon.