

GCC Patient Guidance

Visiting a chiropractor

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Chiropractors are qualified healthcare professionals who can assess, diagnose and treat a wide range of conditions, such as back and neck pain, minor sports injuries and sciatica. As well as relieving symptoms of pain and discomfort, chiropractors can also improve mobility and reduce disability associated with muscle and joint problems.

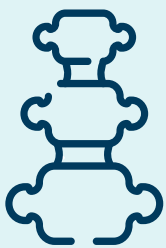
This guidance will provide helpful information on choosing a chiropractor, prepare you for the initial assessment and explain how to make the most of your ongoing care.

How can a chiropractor help me?

Chiropractors are trained to use a range of techniques when treating their patients. They are best known for using manual methods of care, including spinal and joint manipulation (also referred to as 'adjustment') but may also use other hands-on or instrument-assisted approaches.

Many chiropractors will also provide lifestyle advice and exercises to help you manage your condition. This may include dietary and nutritional advice as well as strategies to manage stress and discomfort.

Hands-on treatments



Spinal
manipulation



Extremity
joint
manipulation



Soft tissue
treatments



Mobilisation

Choosing a chiropractor

When choosing a chiropractor, it is important to ask the following questions:

Is the chiropractor registered with the General Chiropractic Council (GCC)?

Chiropractors are regulated healthcare professionals in the same way as doctors, dentists and pharmacists. As such, you can be confident that they are committed to providing safe and high-quality care. To practise in the UK, a chiropractor must be qualified and registered with the GCC. Indeed, it is illegal for anyone to call or refer to themselves as a chiropractor without being registered.

You can check if a chiropractor is registered by using the GCC 'Find A Chiropractor' search function at www.gcc-uk.org/find-a-chiropractor.

Other questions you may wish to ask/consider before choosing a chiropractor

- What treatment options are available for your condition?
- What technique/s will the chiropractor use to treat your condition?
- Where will you be treated ie. in a private room or an open plan room with several treatment tables?
- What is the cost of the initial assessment? (See page three)
- What is the cost of a treatment session?
- Are there any additional costs to consider ie. X-rays?
- On average, how long does a treatment session last?
- Is the practice conveniently located ie. is the clinic close to public transport links and/or has parking?
- What are the opening times of the clinic?



While some chiropractors offer services through the NHS, most work in the private sector. This often means that you will be responsible for covering the costs of treatment, either privately or through your health insurer.

Visit duration & cost

New patient consultation:

30-60 minute.

Follow-up (on average):

10-30 minute.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8



Visits: 4-7 (on average)

The number of times you visit a chiropractor for treatment will vary depending on your condition



First visit: **£50-£100**
(typical range)



Follow-up visit: **£30-£50**
(typical range)

Your first visit (initial assessment)

Before starting any treatment, and to determine the best plan of care, the chiropractor will undertake an assessment of your health. This will involve gathering information on your condition, relevant lifestyle aspects and your current and past health history. In addition, the chiropractor will usually perform a physical examination and may recommend further investigations, such as X-rays. Parts of the assessment may require you to remove items of clothing. If this is the case, you will be offered a gown.

Following your initial assessment, the chiropractor will provide you with an explanation of their findings, what recommended treatment options are available, and the benefits and risks of care. They will also explain alternative treatment options and what happens if your condition does not improve as expected. This may include referring you to another healthcare professional. At all stages of treatment and care, you will be involved in shared decision making with the chiropractor.

Once the initial assessment visit is complete, the chiropractor will create a plan of care, which they will discuss with you and answer any questions. Only when you are happy to proceed and understand the implications of treatment, including the cost, will the chiropractor ask for your consent to begin treatment.

Report of findings

At the end of your first visit (initial assessment), the chiropractor will explain how they can best help you. Following this, they will create a plan of care based on your specific needs.



Questions you may want to ask during your first visit (initial assessment)

- What treatment is recommended for the condition?
- How will this treatment help my condition?
- Can you explain the benefits and potential risks of the treatment?
- How will you/we manage these risks?
- How many chiropractic sessions will I need before my condition improves?
- How long is each treatment session?
- What is the cost of a treatment session and the likely cost of the full programme of care?
- What happens if my condition does not improve?
- Are there any symptoms I should expect after treatment sessions eg. feeling stiff?
- How do I seek advice between appointments?
- Are there any precautions I should take regarding the treatment eg. not running?
- How can I give feedback?



Getting the best from your ongoing care

During treatment, the chiropractor will choose specific techniques to improve your condition. They will explain these techniques including hand placement on your body. However, should you have any questions or wish further explanation, please ask.

How many chiropractic sessions will you need?

The number of sessions will vary depending on your condition and how the treatment progresses. However, the chiropractor should be able to provide an indication of the number of treatments you may need.

Most patients see improvements in their condition after a few treatment sessions. If you do not notice an improvement in this time, the chiropractor will discuss other care options or seek to refer you to another healthcare professional.

You can decide to stop treatment at any time. You will not be expected to pay for treatments you have not received.

To find out more about seeing a chiropractor, and answers to some frequently asked questions, visit www.gcc-uk.org/seeing-a-chiropractor