



MAINTENANCE CARE

A Little More Chiropractic, A Lot Less Pain

Editorial Staff

Why should I visit a doctor of chiropractic when I'm not experiencing pain or other symptoms?

That's the question many patients still ask themselves, despite the growing body of research supporting the value of chiropractic maintenance care. *Here's why.* The latest study on maintenance care for low back health suggests receiving chiropractic care periodically dramatically reduces the number of days LBP patients experience "bothersome" low back pain over the course of a year.

Published in the multidisciplinary open-access journal *PLOS One*, the investigator-blinded, two-arm, randomized, controlled trial included 328 consecutive patients ages 18-65 with nonspecific low back pain who experienced a favorable response to chiropractic care during their initial course of treatment. Patients were recruited from 40 chiropractic clinics between 2012-2016. Patients were then randomly allocated to one of two groups for one year: a maintenance care group that received periodic chiropractic care or a control group that returned to their chiropractor only when LBP symptoms were present.



Every week, researchers assessed subjects' low back pain with a single question: "On how many days during the past week were you bothered by your lower back (i.e., it affected your daily activities or routines)?" During the 12-month tracking period, members of the maintenance care (MC) group made an average of 6.7 visits to the chiropractor, compared with 4.8 visits by members of the control group. Those additional visits correlated with *12.8 fewer days of bothersome low back pain*, on average, for MC group members compared to control group members.

How important is 12.8 fewer days of bothersome LBP a year? You know the answer, but do your patients (or non-patients in pain who haven't made the decision to visit a chiropractor yet)? For anyone who's experienced LBP, particularly in chronic / recurring fashion, we like to think it's well-worth a few "extra" visits to the chiropractor every year.

As mentioned, this also isn't the first study to investigate maintenance care for low back pain. For example, in 2011 we reported on a study in *Spine* titled, "Does Maintained Spinal Manipulation Therapy for Chronic Non-Specific Low Back Pain Result in Better Long-Term Outcome?" Patients suffering from chronic LBP (six months or longer) received one month - 12 visits - of spinal manipulative therapy and then were randomized to receive either maintenance SMT visits every two weeks for nine months or the initial 12 visits only.

After 10 months, only the group receiving maintenance care reported significant improvement, while pain and disability scores had returned "near to their pretreatment level" in the group receiving one month only of SMT.

Interested in learning more about either study - and/or sharing the good news with your patients? The *PLOS One* study is accessible in its entirety by [clicking here](#), while the abstract for the *Spine* study is [available here](#). Pass our article and the study abstracts along to your patients as evidence-based support for your ongoing care.

