

Are You a Bad Chiropractic Patient?

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My father was a great DC. In fact, as you might expect, he was the doctor of chiropractic I measured all other doctors against. Sadly, he died at age 61 when I was in my early 30s. It would've been nice to have him around for at least another decade or so (if not longer). Unfortunately, he was a great chiropractor, but a poor chiropractic patient. Sound familiar?

As I've mentioned in several columns over the years, his early death was partially due to his lack of health. Working long hours, he didn't always eat as he should have, or take the time to exercise. While he was consistent with his vitamins, he didn't always get adjusted as often as he needed to, either.

In short, he taught a wellness lifestyle, but failed to live one.

Through the years, I've been very conscientious to live the wellness lifestyle he taught me. His death was a reminder that spurred my determination. As I've gotten older, I've learned a few things that have helped me be a better chiropractic patient. Perhaps they will help you, too. While you may consider this to be fundamental advice, you'd be surprised how many doctors of chiropractic talk the talk, but don't walk the walk.

Give yourself the gift. I know it sounds ridiculously obvious, but some doctors of chiropractic don't get adjusted until they are in nagging pain (my dad was sometimes like this). If you schedule a regular appointments with another DC, it will happen. It's really that simple. And remind yourself, *would I ever let one of my own patients go this long without an adjustment?*

You are what you eat. The easiest way to quit smoking is to stop buying cigarettes. The same holds true for eating right. You can easily put together a daily menu of food you can bring to the office. This will keep you from eating out, which often results in eating the wrong foods. Armed with healthy options, you'll be far less likely to resort to the healthier choices lurking around the corner or down the street.

With a little research on the Web, you can choose a combination of foods that will meet your nutritional needs and stay within your calorie range. (It can also be a lot less expensive.) Rather than overthink it, I tend to eat the same thing up until dinner. That way, I ensure that two-thirds of my food is on target.

Are you taking the right vitamins? My father provided me with the same vitamins for years as a young adult. After he died, I just kept taking them. Believe it or not, it wasn't until 25 years later, at age 58, that I realized I was overdue for a nutritional update. I called the supplement company and talked to one of the owners I knew, who was very gracious and informative. He knew a lot about supplements and helped me revise my vitamins to suit my age and activity level.

If you haven't done it in a while, take a look at the nutritional supplements you take. Pretend you are a

new patient and make the changes that best fit who you are now. If you need lab tests, get them. If you need advice, call the supplement company you work with. They have people who can help you.

Set the exercise example. Many people enjoy working out every day, but I'm not one of them. I work out because it's important to my health. All the studies I have read make it clear exercise is part of the metabolic process that leads to health. Three times a week, cardio and resistance, for at least an hour. The harder you work, the more you get the results you want. Would you suggest any less to your patients?

Avoid the "dumb stuff." Believe it or not, there are DCs who smoke, drink excessively and take drugs that aren't absolutely necessary. This is just the beginning of the list of what I call "dumb stuff" that is inconsistent with a wellness lifestyle. Why do it?

According to my understanding of chiropractic principles, chiropractic patients should enjoy a very high quality of life well into their 90s, barring a traffic accident or similar demise. In a little over two years, I will surpass the age of my father when he passed on. This will support all he taught me.

Every doctor of chiropractic and every chiropractic patient should be a walking example of wellness. To consciously not make every effort in that regard is a poor reflection on our profession. Take a look at your lifestyle and ask yourself: *What kind of chiropractic patient am I?*

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