

The Wellness Express™

Jump on the train to good health

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Chiropractic: Helping You Live Longer & Stronger

Presented by:

Introduction

Chiropractic is healthcare approach dedicated to restoring and preserving optimal health. Your chiropractor is trained to assess all aspects of your health and make thoughtful suggestions about how you can live well throughout your entire lifespan. There is some debate in the healthcare community about whether chiropractic care does indeed improve longevity, so we will examine this question more closely in this edition of the Wellness Express in the hopes of finding a helpful answer (we will also discuss another, perhaps more significant question).

What *is* clear is that the health habits you form, and practice each day, have a profound effect on your long-term health and well-being. Through thoughtful interventions and personalized care, your chiropractor can help you achieve the healthy life you have always desired. Ask your chiropractor



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about an individualized treatment plan designed to keep you healthy and active well into old age.

What is Longevity?

Longevity, as it is usually defined, means life expectancy or the typical length of life, measured in years. Longevity varies from country to country and even within countries. Longevity also varies based on sex, with women usually outliving men by a significant amount. A 2006 article published in the journal *Gender Medicine* states that women have historically lived longer than men in almost every country and that this is so because they are more robust at every age (and *not* because women age more slowly).¹ More active female immune functioning, the protective effect of estrogen, and reduced activity of growth hormone are all possible causes of this discrepancy in longevity between the sexes.

What Factors Affect Longevity?

Genetics and lifestyle are two of the most important factors that may affect life expectancy. The role of genetics in longevity is an increasingly popular research field and researchers are discovering interesting information.

Exercise of the Week

Lumbar stabilization (stage 3) Plank Position

Difficulty: Moderate

(Consult your chiropractor before engaging this or any other exercise.)

Start: Lie down on stomach. Then, begin by propping upper body up onto elbows/forearms, with hands together in prayer position. Engage inner abdominal muscles by bringing belly button inward. Keeping spine steady, lift hips and knees so you're resting on toes, creating a straight line from ankles to shoulders.

Exercise: Keeping spine steady, lift one leg 6-8 inches. Hold this position for 10-20 seconds. (Option 1)

If this is relatively easy, try bringing that leg horizontally out to side as far as you can, keeping torso steady. Hold this position for 10-20 seconds. (Option 2) Switch legs, and repeat. Perform 3-5 sets of this exercise per side. Be careful not to strain lower back.



According to a 2006 study published in the journal *Human Genetics*, genetics do indeed appear to influence human lifespan, though the genetic influences on lifespan are minimal before age 60 and only increase thereafter.²

Lifestyle factors play a large role in longevity, too. Lifestyle factors that may affect longevity (especially in men), notes a 2008 study published in the journal *Archives of Internal Medicine*, include smoking abstinence, weight control, blood pressure control and regular exercise.³ Diet is another huge lifestyle factor affecting longevity. A 2004 study published in the *European Journal of Cancer Prevention* confirms that there is indeed sufficient evidence that diet influences longevity, especially as it concerns coronary heart disease and cancer.⁴

Does Chiropractic Add Years to Your Life?

A 2004 study published in the *Journal of the Canadian Chiropractic Association* concludes that chiropractic care may *not* add years to your life, though the mortality data examined in this study was limited, report the authors.⁵ This study did note, however, that chiropractic care may add *life* to your *years*, which is perhaps an even more important consideration. Chiropractic care can improve your mobility, musculoskeletal function and sense of well-being. It also helps relieve debilitating symptoms - all factors that can help you get the most out of your years.

Still, a strong case can be made that chiropractic care does indeed improve longevity. From a prevention standpoint, chiropractic is a standout in the healthcare field. According to a 2000 study published in the *Journal of Manipulative and Physiological Therapeutics*, the level of primary care, health promotion and prevention activities provided by chiropractors exceeds that of other physicians.⁶ In helping you successfully modify your health behaviors, your chiropractor is favorably affecting your longevity in a way that is difficult to assess using conventional research methods.

Why Being Healthy Matters

Remaining healthy and active throughout your lifespan is essential for realizing a high quality of life. Any therapy, including chiropractic care, promoting nerve, organ, and musculoskeletal health and function is important for achieving this health goal. Chiropractic care is particularly effective in restoring and preserving mobility, which allows you to engage in a physically active lifestyle, which itself confers numerous health benefits. Perhaps what is most significant though is the enhanced mobility and physical activity chiropractic care enables in seniors. The preservation of independent living in seniors is a major health-positive attribute of chiropractic care and one of the key reasons you should maintain regular visits with your chiropractor throughout your lifespan.

Quote to Inspire

“You can't help getting older, but you don't have to get old.”

George Burns

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