

Chiropractic Cervical Manipulation

By The American Chiropractic Association

Complications of chiropractic cervical manipulations are so rare that, statistically speaking, if you drive more than a mile to get to your chiropractic appointment, it's more likely that you'll be seriously injured in a car accident than you'll be seriously injured during your chiropractic visit.

One superior court judge has said, "the risk of stroke due to chiropractic cervical adjustment is so remote that informing the plaintiff of such risk and securing the patient's consent to the adjustment is not required." Perhaps this is because chiropractic is hundreds of times safer than the most common treatments for neck pain, headaches and other musculoskeletal conditions.

The low risks of chiropractic treatment are reflected in the extremely low malpractice rates for the nation's doctors of chiropractic. Malpractice insurance rates for health care professionals across the country are directly proportional to the number of claims made against those particular groups by patients. According to NCMIC, the average malpractice insurance rate for doctors of chiropractic across the country is \$1,500. For general physicians (MDs), rates range from \$10,000 to \$20,000--depending on the area of the country.

A recent biomechanical study that measured the forces transmitted to the vertebral artery during cervical spine (neck) manipulation (adjustment) found that the forces transmitted to the vertebral artery during this procedure are less than one-ninth the force necessary to stretch or otherwise damage a normal vertebral artery.

The most common conventional first-line treatment for most musculo-skeletal pain syndromes is NSAIDS (non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs). The risk of that treatment for neck pain and other related conditions is probably significantly greater than the risks of any chiropractic procedures. The risk of death, per year, from GI bleeding due to NSAID use is 400 in 1,000,000 as compared to the risk of death or major complication from cervical manipulation which is only 1 in 4,000,000.

The odds of suffering a serious complication from a chiropractic neck treatment are about one in 2 million. These are the same odds as dying in a commercial air crash. Even the most conservative conventional medical treatment for neck and back pain, prescription drugs, is hundreds of times more likely to cause a serious reaction.

All available evidence demonstrates that chiropractic neck treatment holds an extremely small risk. The chiropractic profession takes this very seriously and engages in training and postgraduate education

courses, to recognize the risk factors in patients, and to continue rendering treatment in the most effective and responsible manner.