

# Information for you about Veterinary Chiropractic

## What is chiropractic?

Chiropractic is a noninvasive, drugless system of health care. You're not alone if you've always thought of chiropractic for back problems – but it's a lot more!

Chiropractic is really an overall system of health care that deals with the nerves, muscles, and joints of the body along with, of course, the spine. All the nerves of our body, and the bodies of our pets, get to where they are going after exiting the spine. These nerves then arrive at their final destination to do their job. That job might be facilitating fine muscle motions like those that allow you to manipulate a fork, play the piano, or dance. Or, they could be nerves that allow you or your pet to feel heat, or cold, or pressure. Or, nerves that allow you to digest your food properly and eliminate normally. Or, nerves that allow you to think clearly, to heal quickly after an injury, to give birth normally, or even to be able to become pregnant.

## How can I tell if chiropractic care is needed?

If the body's nerves are compressed or squashed as they exit the spine, any of the jobs the nerves do could be affected. How could a nerve be compressed? Injury is a common cause. Even the normal twisting, turning, and bending we do throughout the course of a normal day can cause the bones of the spine to shift out of position slightly. A chiropractor calls this shift a subluxation. In a healthy human or animal body, this subluxation usually corrects itself (otherwise, we'd all be seeing chiropractors every day!) However, if we are stressed, ill, unhealthy, obese, or just plain try to do too much, the subluxation can cause swelling and compression of the delicate tissues around the spine. These tissues normally act to protect the nerves as they exit the spine, and they do a good job – but if they are injured, they react like any other injured tissue, and they swell and bruise. The nerves become affected, and the job they do is affected, too.

What sort of problems might arise when a subluxation occurs and the nerves are affected? Damaged nerves can either transmit information too fast or not fast enough. Picture the nerves to your – or your pets – intestines being damaged. A speeding up of information from those nerves to the muscles of the intestine wall could cause diarrhea. A slowing down of the information could cause constipation. Now, picture a nerve to the foot or paw being affected. The patient might experience pain, or tingling, or numbness, or an inability to use the foot well. What about a nerve supply to a joint, or even direct damage to the joint causing the joint to shift out of normal position? The patient might start to move in a greater range than nature ever intended. Causing stress to surrounding joints. All of these scenarios can arise from a simple back injury!

## What does a veterinary chiropractor do?

Chiropractic is different from other systems of medicine, in that a chiropractic doctor works to eliminate the cause of the problem, not just the symptoms of the problem. Treating only your pet's symptoms is like seeing a Smokey fire and clearing out the smoke without putting out the fire – you know that the smoke will come back eventually!

Whether your pet's problem is chronic constipation, a painful hip, an inability to complete an agility course quickly, a lick lesion on a foot, or a painful, stiff spine, a veterinary chiropractor will likely start by examining the spine and then all the joints, from those of the shoulders and hips down to individual toe joints. Adjustments are adjusted as they are found, and we always keep track of what we find and how we adjust it for later reference.

## Will the treatment hurt my pet?

We take great care to make treatment comfortable for your pet. A good, painless chiropractic adjustment depends on two very important things: the skill of the chiropractor in achieving a fast adjustment, and the identification of the right spot on which to perform the adjustment. If your pet has substantial muscle spasms associated with a subluxation, we will either typically utilize adjustment should be pain-free. If you ever see a chiropractor "forcing" an adjustment, count on it: it's not the right thing for your pet.

# Information for you about Veterinary Chiropractic continued

## How long does it take to make my pet better?

Chiropractic care can take time, since we are usually treating a problem that has been present for some time. Even if an injury appears to come on quickly – for example, you pick up a big sack of groceries and your back “goes out” – it has likely been coming on for some time. Did your back really just go out from picking up the same sack of groceries you’ve picked up a million times before? Of course not! But a little extra weight on your backside, a little less working out, a lot of stress at work and home, too much caffeine and not enough nutritious food can all work together to make picking up that one sack of groceries a big event, enough to strain your muscles and cause a subluxation. The same is true for your pet.

### **Will my pet be the way she was when she was a young dog after adjustment?**

The speed and completeness of recovery after an injury is identified depends on these factors:

1. *The length of time the injury was determined to have been present:*

Older injuries will take more time to correct, since the body will eventually accept a chronic subluxation as “normal”. If your body thinks a problem is “normal”, we’ll need to take time to retrain the body.

2. *The pet’s age and physical condition:*

The healthier a pet is, the faster they heal. While a 14 year old pet isn’t going to become a “spring chicken” with chiropractic therapy, her quality of life will be greatly enhanced with ongoing therapy.

3. *The amount of damage to the nerves, joints, and spine:*

While minor injuries heal quickly and completely, serious injuries take a longer time to heal. Sometimes, the injury is so severe that limited healing may take place. We’ll always be honest with you about how much recovery can be expected after injury.

4. *Your cooperation:*

Since chiropractic care takes time, we usually set up an anticipated schedule of needed treatments. How well and how completely your pet heals is directly related to how well you are able to maintain treatment on a needed basis. Pets removed from treatment too soon will often relapse and the best results may not be achieved.

### **Which of the Doctors at County Animal Clinic perform veterinary chiropractic?**

Dr. Anders is skilled and an experienced veterinary chiropractor, certified in veterinary chiropractic through the American veterinary chiropractic association. He is also certified in veterinary acupuncture through the International Veterinary Acupuncture Society.

### **How do I know that your hospital is the right place for me?**

County Animal Clinic is a mixed animal practice dealing with traditional and integrative medicine. This means that we adhere to the highest standards of patient care, client education, and training for our Doctors and staff. We bring you the best of advanced knowledge about both western medicine and other systems of medical care, such as Acupuncture, chiropractic, herbal medicine and other healing modalities. Most importantly, we treat your pet with the same care and compassion that we would give to one of our own pets.

### **How do I schedule my pet for chiropractic care?**

For information about chiropractic consultations and treatment, contact our office at 419-678-3610 or 800-868-VETS (8387). Because we are committed to excellence in holistic and traditional treatment, we examine each patient thoroughly and we do not provide telephone consultations. Veterinary medical ethics stipulates that we cannot offer medical advice or dispense holistic or traditional medicines for pets we have not examined.