

# Questions Questions Questions

## **Why are you asking me so many questions?**

Sometimes your chiropractor may ask you questions that seem completely unrelated to your condition. Or, you may have a medical condition that you think your chiropractor doesn't need to know about. Getting in and out of the office quickly is important to some of our patients and we understand that, however it is our goal to ensure you are getting the best care possible and you can help by answering all of our questions to the best of your ability. Just as a physical examination of your complaint is important in leading us to the correct diagnosis, the health history portion of the exam is equally (if not more) important to us. Remember that your health is a two-way process and any extra information you can share with us can help us help you!

Some of the questions your chiropractor may ask are listed below with some of the reasons we are asking them, but remember each case is different and may require more or less discussion.

Let's use an example of low back pain.

### How long have you had the pain?

**Why:** we need to know if this is a chronic, acute, or recurring problem.

### Can you point to the pain with one finger?

**Why:** some conditions cause generalized pain while others have specific pain sites or patterns.

### Was there an injury?

**Why:** how the pain started helps us establish what tissue might be causing the pain. Insidious pain (or pain that began without a reason) might lead us to consider different pain generators then just muscles or joints.

### Do you have pain in any other joints?

**Why:** sometimes joint pain can be the result of systemic conditions/generalized disease such as certain types of inflammatory arthritis.

### Do you have pain in your legs?

**Why:** sometimes back injuries can cause pain, numbness, or loss of sensation in the legs. We need to know if you are experiencing any of these symptoms as it could indicate nerve root irritation. Some more serious conditions like a disc herniation, spinal stenosis, neurological diseases, or cauda equina syndrome may need to be ruled out.

### Does the pain vary throughout the day?

**Why:** different tissues are stressed with different activities, it is important that we can identify which tissue is causing the problem. In some conditions pain is worse with activity and

sometimes it's worse with rest. This information will also help us make recommendations of positions that may offer you relief or activities that you should avoid until you're feeling better.

Can you describe the pain?

**Why:** different tissues cause different types of pain and this is critical to our ability to diagnose your problem. Burning pain, numbness, or loss of sensation may indicate nerve irritation while stiffness might be more indicative of a muscular origin.

Have you noticed any changes in your bowel or bladder function?

**Why:** If you are male, prostate enlargement or cancer may alter your bladder control and may also cause back pain. Kidney infections or kidney stones can cause low/mid back pain that seems muscular in origin. Sudden changes in these functions can indicate a serious condition of a pressure build up in the spinal canal that requires immediate medical attention.

Past medical history/current medical conditions?

**Why:** Some medical conditions such as diabetes, organ diseases, cardiovascular illness, prostate enlargement, infections, or neurological diseases can either cause back pain or masquerade as back pain. They can also alter our treatment choices and change our expectations on how quickly you will be able to recover.

Family medical history?

**Why:** family history is important so that we can watch for the development of any signs of these conditions beginning in you! It may also change which treatment strategies we use, or whether or not we need to do some further medical testing. Whether you like it or not, we don't just inherit our parents' good looks!

Medication use?

**Why:** medications often have side effects. Don't be afraid to tell us if you are taking them! We don't think all medications are evil, sometimes they are absolutely necessary. However, some medications may actually be a contraindication to some of our treatments so please tell your chiropractor what you are taking and why you take it!

Have you ever had anything like this before?

**Why:** Past episodes or similar episodes of back pain can give us a good indication of the likely cause of your current back pain. If you had any treatment before we can use this as a guide to help you get better faster.

What activities do you normally participate in?

**Why:** some activities may cause something called "microtrauma", and when we repeat these things over and over the damage builds up and can result in an injury.

Do you have any foot pain or are you wearing new shoes?

**Why:** Our bodies are connected and your feet support all your body weight! How your feet function – or don't – can be a direct/indirect cause of ankle, knee, hip, or spinal pain.