

# Keep It Going

## Third-Stage Chiropractic Care: Maintenance and Wellness

By Michaela Gulvas

**R**emember when you first went to your chiropractor with your aching back? Those initial few adjustments really helped ease your pain and discomfort. Then there were all those months of correcting what really caused your pain in the first place: a subluxation. (stage two of chiropractic care).

It's been a year and you really feel great. This is when many patients decide they no longer need chiropractic care. Chiropractors agree about that for many patients, when their pain is gone, so are they. They are eliminating the third stage of treatment: maintenance.

### THE VALUE OF ONGOING CARE

By stopping care now, you are playing roulette with your body. Dr. Kathryn Hoiriis, Hands-On Health Center, Decatur, GA. says this (maintenance) is a "vital" part of your treatment. "We engage in many repetitive activities and postures that have impact on the mechanical function of the spine which in turn may impact nervous function in adverse ways. The neuromusculoskeletal system is complex. **Patients should complete the care plan established by their chiropractor for optimal return to health and then should continue with routine spinal care to improve and maintain health.**"

Once your body is in alignment you want to keep it this way. And not just to be free of pain. When there is an improved alignment of the spinal vertebra you will also have better joint



motion, reduced nerve interference, improved muscle function as well as less pain. Adjustments maintain the communication between brain and tissue. The flow of nerve impulses through the spinal cord and spinal nerves is normalized. This means your body begins to regulate and heal itself.

### THE NO-PAIN, HOME-FREE MYTH

Just because your pain is relieved, doesn't mean you are well. Nor does it mean it won't come back. Dr. Shawn Dill, Hayward, CA. notes that "It's important to understand that pain will usually be the first thing to go, and you must continue to work with your

chiropractor to obtain full functional resolution."

### RISKY BUSINESS

By stopping care you are putting yourself at jeopardy. If you don't maintain what you have gained, the condition that brought you to the chiropractor in the first place, will present itself again. Your body has to be aligned or balanced. **"I often tell patients it's not a matter of if the pain comes back; it's when," says Dr. Christian Cohen, Gig Harbor, WA.**

When subluxations return and are left untreated, ongoing changes occur. If left ignored, these can result in damage to the structure and function of the spine along with accompanying nerve damage.

### PART OF LIFE

In the normal everyday things we do, we subject ourselves to potential injury, strains and sprains. Chiropractic can help prevent some of those injuries while making those you do incur, easier to treat. **"Ongoing care is one step you can make toward undoing all of the damage we constantly do to ourselves," says Dr. Matt French, Phoenix, AZ.**

When you add the results of the advanced aging process to all the other problems that can occur in the spine, it can generally be said that elderly people have more chronic problems and need more chiropractic care.

*Please check our website at [www.chiropractormonthly.com](http://www.chiropractormonthly.com) for the first two articles in this series.*