



GENERAL STATEMENT for INFORMED CONSENT in our CHIROPRACTIC CENTRE:

This document is a general statement applicable to all clients we see.

Informed Consent requires that you understand and accept the potential **benefits**, **risks** and **alternatives** related to the care we propose.

Before you begin care at our health centre we will ask you to complete a form acknowledging that you have read and understood this information, that we have discussed this with you and that you have had opportunity to ask questions to clarify anything contained herein. This form will also note any individual risks that we may have identified that apply to you based on your personal circumstances and health history.

Before outlining benefits, risks or alternatives we must discuss our FOCUS:

Our health centre is focused on **helping you toward living your best life possible**. One essential part of this process is maximising the efficient and clear communication between your brain and body, via the nervous system and spinal cord.

There is clear evidence that dysfunctional or deranged nerve feedback (resulting from subluxation) can have significant and detrimental impacts on the function of your brain, and by extension, your LIFE. *There is also clear evidence that such dysfunction is often present without any symptoms or awareness on your part!* Because you are often unaware of these 'clinically silent' subluxations, we contend that regular assessment and analysis (prenatal testing) is important to identify such functional disturbance in advance of any symptoms presenting. Once symptoms do occur, the problems have already been present for a LONG time.

The earlier subluxations are found and reduced, the increased likelihood that your body will operate at its best. Adjustments are performed by your chiropractor primarily with their hands (at times other parts of their body too), specific instruments, tables and other equipment. Adjustments are usually very fast and gentle but may also involve sustained contact/traction or maintaining a given posture/position over a period of time with the assistance of gravity. **Sometimes you will hear a 'pop' or noise with an adjustment**, at other times you will not. This 'cavitation' is a release of pressure (in the form of a gas bubble) within one or more joints – like the release of pressure when you pop a cork in your champagne. **The noise is NOT the adjustment!**

Supporting Information & Concepts:

It is irrefutable that the brain coordinates and controls your function, health and wellbeing based primarily on its ability to appropriately process and analyse the sensory information it receives from the body (perception of your internal and external environment). For this to occur most efficiently and accurately, clear brain-body connection & communication requires that your nervous system, spinal cord and the joints of your spine (and body) are functioning at their best. This provides for correct input-output loops, essentially improving your brain's 'awareness' of your internal and external environment. The RESULT: better coordination and control.



By addressing Subluxation (a form of neurological interference that disturbs this brain feedback) *energy and resources within your body are liberated, making you more EFFICIENT* and by extension, improving function such as growth, cellular reproduction and healing. *If we find clinical evidence of subluxation being present our primary recommendation is regular, ongoing nervous system checks by a qualified chiropractor to identify and reduce subluxation combined with teaching you how to work toward preventing their reoccurrence.*

We accept that removal of subluxation is only one part of being truly "well." As such, we also provide other services, advice and recommendations collectively termed 'Vibrant Life Coaching.' Such advice may include recommendations for home-care, nutrition, supplementation, neuro-emotional work, lifestyle change suggestions and more. This coaching aims to support the correction of subluxations and continue to improve your body integrity, further enhancing your quality of life and function.

Definitions:

***Adjustment:** The specific application of forces with intent and direction to facilitate the body's self-correction of subluxation. There are many different techniques to achieve an adjustment.*

***Health:** A state of optimal physical, mental and social wellbeing, not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. (ie. just because you are not 'sick' or don't have overt symptoms DOES NOT mean you are necessarily healthy).*

***Subluxation:** Dysfunction (misalignment, fixation or aberrant motion) of one or more joints of your body (particularly those of your spinal column). Subluxation causes nervous system damage - altered nerve feedback hampering correct brain function; this results in a lessening of your body's innate ability to express its maximum health potential.*

How we develop our recommendations -

Our recommendations are based on *our professional experience, your presenting history, analysis of your examination results and the goals or outcomes you need and want* for your care. Our recommendations often include an initial period of intensive care, with frequency of your visits reducing over time, as we see your body begin to respond, change and 'learn' new habits.

We regularly assess your progress and confirm your goals because we're all about you achieving your desired outcomes as quickly as possible! We believe that incorporating ongoing spinal health checks as a healthy life habit for the rest of your life can be, quite literally, life-changing! Recommending regular nervous system (spinal) checks and clinical care (if it is found necessary) is valid whether or not an illness, condition or diagnosis exists (see above - *subluxations rarely cause overt symptoms*).

****It is critically important to understand that we are not recommending spinal adjustments as a form of treatment or cure for diagnosed conditions (which may also be present). Irrespective of diagnoses you may have or your general level of health (or illness), your body will function better (and by extension, heal better) when it is subluxation-free.**

Some people choose more limited periods of care. We recommend care plans for a distinct number of visits and we always set a review date (usually in 12-visit intervals). You are free to cease or modify your care-plan at any time in consultation with us however we recommend that you keep to your agreed care-plan until your review. Our experience has shown that changing your care-plan (or ceasing care) before a review does not tend to achieve the outcomes people seek - it is well known that healing takes time!

SYMPTOMS USALLY DO GET BETTER with Chiropractic Care...

Symptoms (and other conditions or illness) may improve or resolve while under chiropractic care **HOWEVER chiropractic care is not a FIX, TREATMENT or CURE**. It must be understood that if symptoms resolve this is a happy SIDE EFFECT! Symptoms are indicators that your body has hit a point of dysfunction and/or exhaustion - you have exceeded your body's phenomenal ability to adapt.

Please understand that chiropractic care is about improving healthy brain-body communication and then maintaining it by teaching your body healthier habits/strategies. *We'll celebrate with you when symptoms or illnesses improve, but we never claim to 'treat' 'fix', or 'cure' any symptoms or disease processes.*

Chiropractors are primary-care health professionals; we have an obligation to assess you and refer you elsewhere if your presenting situation falls outside our scope. If during our examination or your subsequent care, we encounter unusual findings, we will advise you. *If you desire advice, diagnosis or treatment for those findings, we will refer or recommend you to the appropriate health care provider.*

Chiropractors help you begin to provide the ESSENTIAL REQUIREMENTS for living at your best – as this happens your body will show improvements (that may include symptoms resolving) simply because it has more efficient use of its internal resources and as it begins to overcome the dysfunction which has led to symptoms.

Informed Consent - BENEFITS:

It is impossible (and unethical) to GUARANTEE specific results. Every person is different. We truly don't know exactly how your body will respond, and therefore, what results you will achieve or how long this may take. *What we CAN confirm is that most people who begin chiropractic care and stick with our recommendations (including doing their self-care 'homework') report significant improvements as they complete stages of chiropractic care.*

Some of the clinical outcomes we have seen include:

- Improved energy levels
- Improved concentration
- Improved sleep quality and hygiene
- Improved productivity in life and at work
- Better balance and body coordination
- Better flexibility or range of motion
- Reduced discomfort (pain) and/or inflammation
- Improved moods, emotions and in some cases, mental health outcomes
- Improvements or changes in learning, behaviour and memory
- Better interpersonal relationships, increased levels of happiness, fun and vitality.
- Better 'quality of life' (measured in a variety of ways)

We also often see people who have chosen to continue with regular chiropractic care for a period of time tend to begin implementing healthier life strategies (exercise, yoga, life-planning, and more) and in some cases achieve weight-release (-loss) goals.

Beyond these possible benefits, normalising brain-body communication loops (feedback) can help reduce the unconscious 'stress' response (fight-or-flight) in the body which can potentially result in significant improvements to many body-wide (systemic) functional disturbances or 'conditions.'

Informed Consent - RISKS:

All types of healthcare have associated material risks. It's important to *weigh these risks against the expected or likely benefits* before beginning such care. Chiropractic adjustments use variable (but usually very mild) forces used by a chiropractor to move spinal bone/joint structures or other body parts. These forces can put stress on blood vessels, bones, discs, nerves and soft tissues like muscles etc.

There are somewhat common, yet relatively benign (less serious) risks that may occur: muscle/joint soreness (discomfort), occasional bruising, nausea/dizziness, sprains/strains, occasional inflammation or referral of symptoms to other areas of the body (this list is not exhaustive).

Such outcomes are usually due to the break-up of adhesions (micro-scars) in body tissues, and/or your body adapting to its improved movement or function. Similar to retraining the body at the gym, there may be some element of delayed-onset soreness. If these things occur they tend to be temporary (short-term) and pass quickly.

Rare (and potentially more serious) Risks:

There are rare risks of fracture (including of the ribs) and exacerbation of injuries such as disc protrusions/encroachments/ruptures (statistical occurrences like: 1/139,000 (neck) & 1/62,000 (low back)) which may cause nerve irritation. These usually only occur as a result of pre-existing conditions and we screen (examine) you thoroughly to reduce the likelihood of these risks.

RISKS OF NOT having Chiropractic Care:

Spinal problems may get worse if uncorrected or not managed and may lead to progressive damage of the spinal discs, the spinal nerves, the spinal cord and even general health.

Just as you would get regular dental or medical checks, it is smart to get regular chiropractic checks too!

Does chiropractic care cause Stroke or Stroke-like symptoms?

Chiropractors in Australia are required to warn of the rare risk that adjustments of the neck may be temporally associated* with stroke or stroke-like symptoms (the figures we must quote are inexact as best - *ranging between 1 in 2 million to 1 in 5.85 million* (Haldeman, et al. Spine 1999 24-8)).

Research from 2008 (Cassidy, et al. Eur Spine J. 2008; 17: 176) which has since been replicated by others has shown that *such risks are not only very rare but are also very similar to the risk of stroke occurring following medical doctor visits* (ie same level of risk). Given that GPs do not adjust your neck, and given significant data showing that adjustments do not impact the vessels in your neck the way they were once thought to, it is likely that other factors contribute to this rare outcome. Proper screening and examination is seen to be the best way to reduce this temporal risk.

Importantly, the risk of strokes in everyday life is many times more likely from common activities such as: 1) reversing your car, 2) sneezing, or 3) having your hair washed while at the hairdresser!

* "temporal" means a relationship in time - one happens within a certain time of the other, but not necessarily "because" of the other.

Informed Consent - ALTERNATIVES:

As described above, chiropractic care at Healthy + Happy Chiropractic is **focused on identifying and reducing subluxation to enhance brain-body communication**, improve function & coordination and assist you to heal or manifest positive changes (improvements) in your lifestyle and life!

At any and all times you are free to combine this care with other healthcare and lifestyle modalities (or seek other approaches instead of chiropractic care), however it must be understood that **there are no alternatives to chiropractic care (when directed at achieving subluxation reduction)**. Chiropractors are the only health professionals trained in assessing for subluxation and adjusting to reduce subluxation (some chiropractors do offer other services or 'therapies' which may have other alternatives).

Most musculoskeletal pain syndromes and conditions have what is called a 'natural history' meaning that associated symptoms are thought to resolve over time on their own (if you do nothing to aggravate them further). Whether the condition truly resolves or whether in fact, your body begins to better compensate for the condition (leading to 'adaptation' where you then stop 'feeling' symptoms) is a matter of some debate. However as described earlier, *our intent is not to treat your symptoms, it is to address subluxations to enhance your brain-body connection.*

If your primary focus right now is getting rid of (the suppression of) pain and symptoms, or the 'fixing', 'curing' or 'treating' of conditions then alternatives to Chiropractic definitely do exist.

Bodywork modalities such as massage, myotherapy, physiotherapy, alternative practitioners, and traditional medical approaches such as medications or surgery are all at your disposal. We are not skilled in these approaches and are not able to advise about the potential benefits or risks of these options. Taking pain-relieving medication is often a *faster, cheaper alternative – clearly how effective this is and/or how long the effects last are necessary for you to consider!*

One clear alternative is having no chiropractic care at all! Many people in our society make that choice every day, usually because they just don't know about the potential benefits of chiropractic care.

This general statement is provided to all potential clients to assist them in providing informed consent.

It has outlined the intent of the proposed care, the benefits, risks and alternatives to the proposed care.

Subject to any clarification with the chiropractic doctors or our team at Healthy + Happy Chiropractic deemed necessary by any individual, this document provides awareness of general potential risks. Such risks may lead to referral, further tests, surgery, incapacity and the like.

It must be understood that results are not guaranteed.

After reading this statement, and when commencing chiropractic care with Healthy + Happy Chiropractic informed consent will be discussed and opportunity will be given to ask any questions necessary for clarification. At such time, acknowledgement of such discussion will be noted and any specific or unique risks or modifying factors to an individual's case that may have been identified will be outlined.