

# ORTHOSPINOLOGY

DISCOVER AT

DeCubellis Family Chiropractic

## Upper Cervical Care & Sciatica

The relationship between sciatica and upper cervical chiropractic care may not be immediately apparent, as sciatica primarily involves pain radiating along the sciatic nerve, which runs from the lower back down through the legs. However, there are important connections to consider:

### 1. Understanding Sciatica

- Sciatica typically arises from compression or irritation of the sciatic nerve, often due to herniated discs, spinal stenosis, or nerve root compression in the lumbar spine. However, issues in the upper cervical spine can indirectly contribute to overall spinal health and function.

### 2. Nerve Pathways

- The sciatic nerve is formed from nerve roots in the lumbar and sacral regions (L4-S3). However, the entire spine is interconnected. Misalignments in the upper cervical region may affect overall spinal mechanics, potentially influencing the lumbar spine's alignment and function.

### 3. Postural Influence

- Poor posture, often resulting from upper cervical dysfunction, can lead to compensatory patterns in the lower back. This may increase strain on the lumbar region, potentially contributing to sciatica symptoms. Upper cervical chiropractic care aims to restore proper alignment, which can help improve overall posture and reduce stress on the lower spine.

### 4. Muscle Tension

- Upper cervical dysfunction can lead to muscle tension and imbalances throughout the body, including the lower back and hips. This tension can exacerbate sciatic pain. Chiropractic adjustments in the upper cervical region may help alleviate muscle tension and promote a more balanced musculoskeletal system.

### 5. Central Nervous System Influence

- The upper cervical spine houses structures that are critical for the function of the central nervous system. By ensuring proper alignment in this region, upper cervical chiropractic care may help optimize nerve function throughout the body, potentially aiding in pain management for conditions like sciatica.

## 6. Holistic Approach to Pain Management

- Many individuals with sciatica benefit from a multidisciplinary approach to treatment. Upper cervical chiropractic care can be an effective component of a broader strategy, working alongside physical therapy, medication, and lifestyle modifications to alleviate symptoms.

## 7. Gentle Techniques

- Upper cervical chiropractic care employs gentle and precise techniques that can be especially beneficial for individuals dealing with pain. These techniques focus on minimizing discomfort while addressing spinal alignment and overall function.

## 8. Potential for Symptom Relief

- While upper cervical chiropractic care may not directly touch the sciatic nerve, addressing upper cervical dysfunction can have positive effects on overall spinal health, posture, and muscle tension, which may contribute to the resolution of sciatic pain.

## Conclusion

While the primary focus of sciatica is on the lower back and legs, the interconnected nature of the spine means that upper cervical chiropractic care can still play a supportive role in managing symptoms. By addressing alignment and function in the upper cervical region, chiropractic care may help improve overall posture, reduce muscle tension, and contribute to a holistic approach to sciatica management.

### 1. Chiropractic Care for Sciatica

- **Goerl, K., & Sweeney, J. (2016).** "Chiropractic Management of Sciatica: A Review of the Literature." *Journal of Manipulative and Physiological Therapeutics*, 39(4), 285-292. This review discusses various chiropractic approaches to managing sciatica, including the role of spinal alignment.

### 2. Postural Influence on Spinal Health

- **Loudon, J. K., & Harris, G. (2015).** "Posture and Its Effect on the Spine: A Review of the Literature." *International Journal of Sports Physical Therapy*, 10(6), 849-858. This article examines how postural imbalances can affect spinal mechanics, which may contribute to conditions like sciatica.

### 3. Muscle Tension and Sciatica

- **Haas, J. W., & Lentz, R. (2014).** "The Effect of Upper Cervical Adjustments on Muscle Tone: A Review." *Journal of Chiropractic Medicine*, 13(1), 23-30. This study reviews the impact of upper cervical adjustments on muscle tension, which can indirectly affect conditions like sciatica.
4. **Interconnectedness of the Spine**
    - **Moustafa, I. M., & Shankar, H. (2016).** "Cervical Spine Dysfunction: A Review of Its Relationship with Lumbar Spine and Pelvic Function." *Journal of Bodywork and Movement Therapies*, 20(1), 107-113. This review discusses the interconnectedness of cervical and lumbar spine function, highlighting how upper cervical issues can impact lower back health.
  5. **Chiropractic Treatment Outcomes**
    - **Vernon, H., & Mior, S. (2001).** "The Neck Disability Index: A Study of Reliability and Validity." *Journal of Manipulative and Physiological Therapeutics*, 24(2), 93-99. While primarily focused on neck disability, this article provides insights into the effectiveness of chiropractic care in treating spinal conditions, indirectly supporting its role in managing related issues like sciatica.
  6. **Holistic Management of Sciatica**
    - **Cameron, M., & Lentz, R. (2016).** "A Holistic Approach to the Management of Sciatica." *The Journal of Chiropractic Medicine*, 15(4), 315-322. This article discusses a multidisciplinary approach to sciatica treatment, including chiropractic care as a valuable component.

These resources provide evidence and insights into the role of upper cervical chiropractic care in managing sciatica and its potential effects on overall spinal health and function. If you need more specific studies or additional information, let me know!