

Investing in Wellness



Health care costs are ever on the rise. In 2007, 16.2% of U.S. Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was spent on health care. 1 National health expenditures are expected to grow 6.2% per year, every year, from 2008-2018. 2 What can we do to protect ourselves and our families from the ever-rising costs of sickness, injury, and aging? Here are some tips, courtesy of the Unified Virginia Chiropractic Association.

Be patient. How old are your problems? Did you first come to the chiropractor because of a sports injury, or car accident, or arthritic pain, or headaches, or just to be your best? Regardless of why you started care, most of us don't just reach down to pick up a grandchild and have a sudden, unexpected injury. Sure, our problems may surprise US... but they rarely surprise your chiropractor. The patient with a back strain may have silent yet significant spinal degeneration that shows up on x-ray, or a disc bulge that shows up on MRI, or improper joint and nervous system function that's evident to a chiropractor's trained hands. Give your body time to respond to care, and open yourself to the possibility that your body can get in the "habit" of feeling good... or even great.

Never be "too busy" to follow your treatment plan. We're all bombarded with alleged "health care" messages telling us that drugs and surgery are the answers to our problems, that quick fixes are the key to making it through our days. These messages can and do affect our behaviors. The average American spent over \$7000 3 on his or her health care this past year, with the lion's share of that figure being hospital and physician care including drugs, surgery, and end-of-life expenditures. When your chiropractor suggests a more intensive treatment plan after a flare-up or injury, consider the time and money an investment in yourself. That investment will literally pay off in cash as you may find yourself having fewer relapses, using less drugs and surgery 4, and missing less time from work.

Don't overdo it. Every day chiropractors see the wonders of hands-on healing... and the consequences of bad decisions. Here's a quote from a patient: "I felt so good after my adjustment, we went and played golf all day. Today, I can hardly move!" Just like a cut on the outside of your body takes time to heal, injuries and improper nerve patterns take time to fully respond to treatment in a lasting way. We'll celebrate your "good days" along with you -- yet be smart. Stay on-track, and remember that good results are no accident -- they're the logical result of adherence to a well-considered plan.

Limit-- or avoid-- unnecessary drugs. Did you know that inflammation is an essential component of the injury process? In our attempts to flee pain, Americans are actually making some of their problems worse by suppressing our body's natural responses. Modern medicine is a wonder, yet Americans overuse drugs. Pain-killing medications (steroids, NSAIDS, acetaminophen/Tylenol, and others) can cause mild to severe problems with chronic or improper dosing.5 As much as possible, stick to the natural methods your chiropractor recommends.

Value yourself. Moms and other care-givers need to avoid putting themselves last in line. Working men and women need to consider that missing treatment visits in order to work may mean longer recovery times, more relapses, and LESS time at work.

Don't let your insurance company dictate your health care. Insurance companies use the terms "in network," "covered services," and "allowables" to leverage their interests and their shareholders' -- not yours. Take charge of your health, and decide what's best for you, separate from the economic and other pressures third parties may inject into the doctor-patient relationship. After all, this is the only body you're going to get.

Make WELLNESS your personal and family priority. Despite the media, you'd be wise to focus on the value of wellness, in contrast to focusing on the cost of sickness. The "sick care" model of American health care is failing. Join the many who have discovered that making a wellness lifestyle the

focus of our time, energy, and values can significantly decrease your family's health care costs for the coming year... and beyond.

For more information about health and well-being,, please give us a call.

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References:

- 1 Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services (CMS), as quoted at http://www.cms.hhs.gov/NationalHealthExpendData/02_NationalHealthAccountsHistorical.asp.
- 2 Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services (CMS), as quoted at <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/NationalHealthExpendData/downloads/proj2008.pdf>.
- 3 Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services (CMS), as quoted at http://www.cms.hhs.gov/NationalHealthExpendData/02_NationalHealthAccountsHistorical.asp.
- 4 Wellmark Blue Cross and Blue Shield 2008 Physical Medicine Pilot on Quality, as reported in *Dynamic Chiropractic*, August 26, 2009, Vol. 27, Issue 18.
- 5 *Celebrate Wellness!* Vol 1, No. 1.