



Life Point

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Back Talk with *Dr. Alex Markel*

Sciatica getting on your nerves?

If sciatica is getting on your nerves, you're not alone. The University of Maryland Medical Center estimates that just over 40% of Americans will experience this kind of pain in their lifetime.

What is Sciatica and why is it so common? Sciatica is a common term for any pain resulting from irritation of the Sciatic nerve. It's common because the sciatic nerve is the longest nerve in the body; therefore, pressure can be placed on it at many locations. Disc bulges placing pressure on the sciatic nerve in the back can cause low back pain and sciatica. Sometimes a muscle located deep in the buttocks can become too tight and put pressure on the sciatic nerve. A misalignment of the lumbar vertebrae in the low back can also put pressure on the sciatic nerve. Finally, spinal degeneration from long-standing back problems can also cause irritation of the sciatic nerve. Sciatic pain is often described as a deep, severe pain that starts low on one side of the back and then shoots down the buttock and the leg with certain movements. Sciatica can also cause hip pain. Unfortunately, traditional medical management is often unsuccessful, forcing many to consider surgery in order to find relief. Luckily, there might be another option!

A study conducted by the National Spine Center in Alberta Canada and published in October of 2010 in the *Journal of Manipulative and Physiological Therapeutics* used 40 study participants that all had sciatica lasting over 3 months which had not responded to treatment with pain medications, lifestyle modifications, physical therapy, massage therapy or acupuncture. They had all been referred by their primary care physicians to spinal surgeons who had deemed them appropriate surgery candidates.

Instead of having all the patients proceed with surgery, they were split into two groups – one group to undergo a surgical microdiscectomy and the other group to be treated with standardized chiropractic adjustments by a single chiropractor.

So what happened? Everyone in the Chiropractic group received relief. Surprisingly 60% of those receiving chiropractic care benefited to the SAME degree as if they had received surgery! As a Chiropractor in Denton, I regularly treat people reporting sciatic symptoms with great results. If you or someone you know is suffering with sciatica, chiropractic might be able to provide the relief you've been looking for.