

Spinal Degeneration

Protecting Your Spine with Chiropractic Care



What is spinal degeneration?

Spinal degeneration is wear and tear of the discs and joints in your spine, eventually leading to reduced height of vertebrae, narrowing of the spinal canal, formation of bony growths called osteophytes and pressure on your nerves as they pass through the spine.

*“Aging and degenerative (arthritic) changes are **NOT SYNONYMOUS.**”*

What causes spinal degeneration?

Misalignments in your spine, called “subluxations”, lead to lack of mobility and eventually degeneration if untreated. Accidents, injuries, obesity and poor nutrition can also leave your joints susceptible to early degeneration.

The phases of spinal degeneration

Normal

- Little or no pain
- No symptomatic signs of nerve interference
- Joints and discs may be stressed but have normal appearance
- Chiropractic plays a preventative role with regular care
- Changes are preventable with chiropractic care & wellness lifestyle

Phase 1

- Occasional pain and stiffness
- Silent nerve interference begins, possibly symptomatic
- Disc narrowing and bone spurring (arthritis) begins
- Chiropractic can make a significant change with regular care
- Mostly reversible with chiropractic care & wellness lifestyle

Phase 2

- Moderate to severe pain
- Evident nerve damage / compression
- Arthritis, bone deformation and height loss
- Chiropractic provides better function and some pain relief
- Some reversible changes possible with extensive care

Phase 3

- Severe, often debilitating pain
- Extensive nerve damage / constant nerve symptoms
- Severe arthritis / damage to joints and discs
- Chiropractic provides symptomatic relief at best
- Irreversible, permanent changes



How does chiropractic help?

Chiropractors detect and remove subluxations, allowing your spine to move properly and distribute stress evenly. Keeping your joints moving and your nerves free of interference can slow, stop and even reverse spinal degeneration. Combined with a wellness lifestyle, chiropractic can make your older years more enjoyable and free of life-altering degeneration.

I don't have pain, can I still get spinal degeneration?

Yes! Degeneration is silent at first – your body can undergo degenerative change for years without you noticing any symptoms. Remember that dysfunction will always happen before pain; your body will do everything possible to keep you functioning pain free, but that doesn't mean your spine isn't under stress.

Am I getting shorter?

As spine and disc degeneration progresses, the total height of your spinal column reduces, giving you a shorter appearance! The misconception is that the loss of height is related to age, when in reality it is related to how well your spine is maintained over the years.

A wellness approach

The best way to deal with spinal degeneration is to prevent it from happening all together. Regular spinal checkups with your chiropractor should be a key part of your preventative strategy for degenerative changes in the spine. Your chiropractor will also be able to give you active care strategies that you can use at home – proper nutrition, regular exercise and correct posture can all have an influence on your chance of experiencing spinal degeneration in the long term.