

ROUTINE RADIOGRAPHIC STUDIES ARE RECOGNIZED AS VALUABLE AND APPROPRIATE IN THE PRACTICE OF CHIROPRACTIC

A Special Informational Resource
from the International Chiropractors Association

Prepared with references from the
ICA Best Practices and Practice Guidelines



Radiography is a scientifically proven and clinically useful modality to evaluate multiple aspects of human spinal anatomy, biomechanics, postural misalignments, subluxations, pathology, and precision in providing important information and safeguards in rendering care in chiropractic practice. However, there have been different attempts by some third party payers and agencies, including insurance companies and insurance claims reviewers, to deny coverage of radiographic studies to patients and reimbursement to practitioners, motivated by economic cost-savings on their part. This divergent trend poses serious concerns in potential for reducing the timeliness, quality and clinical effectiveness of care, and even place patients at added risk by delaying and/or denying these established and proven services.

In response to the situation, the International Chiropractors Association (ICA) has prepared multiple resources and formal position statements based on clinical evidences and scientific references regarding the key benefits and utility of radiographic studies, including the acclaimed professional reference, the *ICA Best Practices and Practice Guidelines* document, a landmark document developed with the purpose of enhancing the quality of care for countless millions of patients. The radiography section of this reference document underscores that:

“Routine Plain Radiography is fully within the Standard of Practice in chiropractic and has been for nearly 100 years. Chiropractors utilize plain film radiography to detect and measure subluxations.”

In addition, according to the *Association of Chiropractic Colleges (ACC)*,

“A subluxation is a complex of functional and/or structural and/or pathological articular changes that compromise neural integrity and may influence organ system function and general health. A subluxation is evaluated, diagnosed, and managed through the use of chiropractic procedures based on the best available rational and empirical evidence.” X-ray studies are a standard clinical tool providing necessary objective clinical evidence.

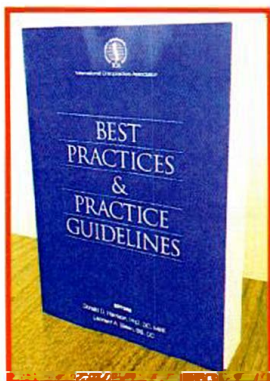
The ICA Guidelines provide extensive scientific references, established clinical and academic protocols, and indications on elements of radiation safety and quality control, as well as clinical indicators for imaging children younger than 10 years old. The ICA Guidelines document has been accepted for inclusion in the United States National Guideline Clearinghouse (NGC), a comprehensive database of



ROUTINE RADIOGRAPHIC STUDIES are RECOGNIZED as VALUABLE and APPROPRIATE in the PRACTICE of CHIROPRACTIC

evidence-based clinical practice guidelines and related documents. The National Guidelines Clearinghouse is an initiative of the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. It is also noted that radiography has been within the scope of chiropractic practice in multiple jurisdictions, including it having been recognized in all the 50 US states for decades.

The **ICA Best Practices and Practice Guidelines** document includes an extensive list of clinical indications for taking an x-ray image of a patient - such as history of trauma, including birth trauma; motor vehicle accidents, falls, and sports injuries; clinical condition(s) affecting the spine and articulations including postural imbalances, biomechanical dysfunctions, scoliosis and other curvatures, arthritis, restrictions or loss of normal movement, pain, subluxations - that indicate the relevance of performing radiographic studies, including the reasonable anticipation that the results of such a study will influence and help direct the chiropractic care of the patient. In addition, however, while guidelines are an effective tool to assist Doctors of Chiropractic in providing appropriate, effective, and safe care for patients, the ultimate judgment regarding the suitability of any study or course of action must be made by the practitioner in light of the unique combination of all the distinctive circumstances and needs related to the particular patient.



Radiographic studies are the most frequently utilized imaging procedure by the chiropractic profession to identify multiple clinical components, including fractures, congenital, traumatic, developmental, postural, biomechanical and degenerative conditions, ruling out pathologies, and assess indications for appropriate options in performing a spinal adjustment. X-ray imaging is an essential tool to assist doctors of chiropractic in determining particular chiropractic techniques and case management strategies, including referral to and consultations with other health care providers.

In addition, it is a usual and customary practice to undertake subsequent radiographic studies where they may be indicated by new circumstances affecting the patient, e.g., motor vehicle accident, frequent pain patterns, sports injury, or other clinical elements indicating the need to evaluate progressive changes, biomechanical

dysfunctions, assess subluxation reduction and correction, and evaluate scoliosis or other curvatures, and to determine factors associated with sudden loss or reduction of clinical progress or efficacy of care. Post adjustment comparison x-ray studies are also standard practice required to effectively utilize certain techniques as it provides valuable information to assess the effects of the chiropractic adjustment and to assess and anticipate the patient's response to care and future progress.



For questions on best practices and radiographic studies in chiropractic care, and for orientation of



The International Chiropractors Association is the oldest continuously active international chiropractic organization in the world and represents thousands of practitioners, educators, students, organizations, and lay persons around the globe. ICA supports and advances the distinct, unique nature of Chiropractic as a non-surgical and drugless healing science, art, and philosophy.

For more information on
Chiropractic, contact ICA.

ICA / 6400 Arlington Boulevard, Suite 800 / Falls Church, VA 22042 / USA
www.chiropractic.org / chiro@chiropractic.org / 800-423-4690 / 703-528-5000

ICA Recognizes Radiographic Studies Are the Standard of Practice in Chiropractic

For Immediate Release, September 27, 2017: Since its establishment in 1926, the International Chiropractors Association (ICA) has recognized that radiography is a scientifically proven, clinically valid and appropriate method to evaluate multiple aspects of human spinal anatomy, identify vertebral subluxations, altered spinal biomechanics, postural misalignments, pathology and in providing information and safeguards in rendering chiropractic care in clinical practice. All fifty of the US States have incorporated authority for doctors of chiropractic to apply diagnostic x-ray procedures in their respective scopes of practice and all US chiropractic colleges teach x-ray procedures and analysis. Nationally, since 1972, the federal Medicare program has either required by statute or, recognized and accepted x-rays of the spine as a primary method of identifying and documenting a vertebral subluxation.

Recent public statements by some organizations participating in the American Board of Internal Medicine Foundation's "Choosing Wisely" campaign are recommending that radiographic imaging should not be used to assess adults with acute low back pain until after six weeks, barring the presence of certain indicators termed "red flags." These same recommendations, originally intended to improve the practice of medicine, will discourage potential patients from seeking the care of a chiropractor when these medical standards are inappropriately applied to the practice of chiropractic.

"The ICA believes that these 'recommendations are out of line with the established standards of chiropractic practice, ignore the large body of clinical and outcomes data that demonstrates the utility, indeed clinical wisdom of such procedures, and clearly can and will, if followed unquestioningly, place patients at risk by delaying or denying diagnostic procedures that have been proven to best serve patients' needs," said ICA President Dr. George Curry. "These new 'Choose Wisely' recommendations have provoked a massive wave of concern, indeed outrage, on the part of scores of chiropractic organizations and, practitioners in the thousands, as simply an unwarranted, intrusive and harmful set of recommendations that can only reduce the safety and clinical effectiveness record of chiropractic. This amounts to nothing less than an attempt to apply an inappropriate medical standard to the practice of chiropractic," Dr. Curry added.

ICA's Clinical Guidelines Committee has carefully evaluated these so-called "Choose Wisely" recommendations and determined that while these recommendations may be applicable for the medical physician who might only proceed to prescribe or recommend pharmaceuticals, they are out of line for the practicing doctor of chiropractic since in the vast majority of cases, doctors of chiropractic apply a specific, directional force to the spine through the chiropractic adjustment process.

Doctors of chiropractic are responsible for assessing the spine to appropriately determine whether or not the patient has a vertebral subluxation and determining if, when and how a chiropractic adjustment may be applied. X-ray studies are a standard clinical tool providing necessary objective clinical evidence and are a critical component of numerous chiropractic techniques taught in CCE accredited programs.

"We would refer any chiropractic practitioner, other health professional or member of the public for that matter to the *ICA Practicing Chiropractors' Committee on Radiology Protocols (PCCRP) For Biomechanical Assessment of Spinal Subluxation in Chiropractic Clinical Practice*, said ICA Guidelines Committee Chair Dr. Joseph Betz. The ICA PCCRP document provides the chiropractic profession with an extensive, rigorous review and appraisal of radiology protocols and their utilization in the context of chiropractic care settings, in conjunction with an exhaustive evaluation of the chiropractic and biomedical literature, including risk benefit ratios, measurement and patient positioning, and patient population applications. The PCCRP Guidelines were the only chiropractic x-ray guidelines ever accepted for inclusion in the National Guideline Clearinghouse (NGC), serving under the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The ICA Best Practices and Practice Guidelines can be viewed online at www.chiropractic.org/bestpractices.

This evidence based PCCRP document, published in 2006, includes an extensive list of clinical indications for taking an x-ray image of the patient such as suspected subluxation, history of trauma, including birth trauma, motor vehicle accidents, falls, postural and for the procedure by chiropractic profession to identify multiple clinical components including fractures, congenital, developmental, postural biomechanical and degenerative conditions, ruling out pathologies, assess the indications for appropriate options in performing a chiropractic spinal adjustment for both the acute and non-acute patient. The ICA's Best Practices and Practice Guidelines also support comparison x-ray studies to effectively utilize certain techniques as it provides valuable information detailing the effects of the chiropractic adjustment and to assess and anticipate the patient's response to care and future progress.

The ICA encourages all chiropractors who feel that their ability to practice with the necessary tools is being threatened to raise their voice and be heard. Further, the ICA wishes to assure the profession that we will aggressively support the use of radiography in the ethical and evidence based practice of chiropractic. We look forward to standing with you against this unfortunate, divisive and needless affront to the profession.

####



The International Chiropractors Association is the oldest continuously active international chiropractic organization in the world and represents thousands of practitioners, educators, students, organizations, and lay persons around the globe. ICA supports and advances the distinct, unique nature of Chiropractic as a non-surgical and drug-less healing science, art, and philosophy.

**ICA / 6400 Arlington Boulevard, Suite 800 / Falls Church, VA 22042 / USA
www.chiropractic.org / chiro@chiropractic.org / 800-423-4690 / 703-528-5000**

ICA Recognizes Radiographic Studies Are the Standard of Practice in Chiropractic



For Immediate Release, September 27, 2017: Since its establishment in 1926, the International Chiropractors Association (ICA) has recognized that radiography is a scientifically proven, clinically valid and appropriate method to evaluate multiple aspects of human spinal anatomy, identify vertebral subluxations, altered spinal biomechanics, postural misalignments, pathology and in providing information and safeguards in rendering chiropractic care in clinical practice. All fifty of the US States have incorporated authority for doctors of chiropractic to apply diagnostic x-ray procedures in their respective scopes of practice and all US chiropractic colleges teach x-ray procedures and analysis. Nationally, since 1972, the federal Medicare program has either required by statute or, recognized and accepted x-rays of the spine as a primary method of identifying and documenting a vertebral subluxation.

Recent public statements by some organizations participating in the American Board of Internal Medicine Foundation's "Choosing Wisely" campaign are recommending that radiographic imaging should not be used to assess adults with acute low back pain until after six weeks, barring the presence of certain indicators termed "red flags". These same recommendations, originally intended to improve the practice of medicine, will discourage potential patients from seeking the care of a chiropractor when these medical standards are inappropriately applied to the practice of chiropractic.

"The ICA believes that these 'recommendations are out of line with the established standards of chiropractic practice, ignore the large body of clinical and outcomes data that demonstrates the utility, indeed clinical wisdom of such procedures, and clearly can and will, if followed unquestioningly, place patients at risk by delaying or denying diagnostic procedures that have been proven to best serve patients' needs," said ICA President Dr. George Curry. "These new 'Choose Wisely' recommendations have provoked a massive wave of concern, indeed outrage, on the part of scores of chiropractic organizations and, practitioners in the thousands, as simply an unwarranted, intrusive and harmful set of recommendations that can only reduce the safety and clinical effectiveness record of chiropractic. This amounts to nothing less than an attempt to apply an inappropriate medical standard to the practice of chiropractic" Dr. Curry added.

ICA's Clinical Guidelines Committee has carefully evaluated these so-called "Choose Wisely" recommendations and determined that while these recommendations may be applicable for the medical physician who might only proceed to prescribe or recommend pharmaceuticals, they are out of line for the practicing doctor of chiropractic since in the vast majority of cases, doctors of chiropractic apply a specific, directional force to the spine through the chiropractic adjustment process. Doctors of chiropractic are responsible for assessing the spine to appropriately determine whether or not the patient has a vertebral subluxation and determining if, when and how a chiropractic adjustment may be applied. X-ray studies are a standard clinical tool providing necessary objective clinical evidence and are a critical component of numerous chiropractic techniques taught in CCE accredited programs.

"We would refer any chiropractic practitioner, other health professional or member of the public for that matter to the *ICA Practicing Chiropractors' Committee on Radiology Protocols (PCCRP) For Biomechanical Assessment of Spinal Subluxation in Chiropractic Clinical Practice*, said ICA Guidelines Committee Chair Dr. Joseph Betz. The ICA PCCRP document provides the chiropractic profession with an extensive, rigorous review and appraisal of radiology protocols and their utilization in the context of chiropractic care settings, in conjunction with an exhaustive evaluation of the chiropractic and biomedical literature, including risk benefit ratios, measurement and patient positioning, and patient population applications. The PCCRP Guidelines were the only chiropractic x-ray guidelines ever accepted for inclusion in the National Guideline Clearinghouse (NGC), serving under the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The ICA Best Practices and Practice Guidelines can be viewed online at www.chiropractic.org/bestpractices

This evidence based PCCRP document, published in 2006, includes an extensive list of clinical indications for taking an x-ray image of the patient such as suspected subluxation, history of trauma, including birth trauma, motor vehicle accidents, falls, postural and for the procedure by chiropractic profession to identify multiple clinical components including fractures, congenital, developmental, postural biomechanical and degenerative conditions, ruling out pathologies, assess the indications for appropriate options in performing a chiropractic spinal adjustment for both the acute and non-acute patient. The ICA's Best Practices and Practice Guidelines also support comparison x-ray studies to effectively utilize certain techniques as it provides valuable information detailing the effects of the chiropractic adjustment and to assess and anticipate the patient's response to care and future progress.

The ICA encourages all chiropractors who feel that their ability to practice with the necessary tools is being threatened to raise their voice and be heard. Further, the ICA wishes to assure the profession that we will aggressively support the use of radiography in the ethical and evidence based practice of chiropractic. We look forward to standing with you against this unfortunate, divisive and needless affront to the profession.

####