



## **Barrhaven Chiropractic Health Centre**

# **Chiropractic Management of Hypertension**

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Managing hypertension, or better known as high blood pressure, has primarily been the responsibility of the medical community through the use of medications and lifestyle changes. Recently, a new clinical trial from Rush University Hypertension Centre in Chicago, published in the March edition of the Journal of Human Hypertension, reports that a certain type of chiropractic neck adjustment may help to correct the position and function of the atlas vertebrae (1<sup>st</sup> cervical vertebrae), significantly lowering blood pressure in patients with Stage-1 hypertension.

The first cervical vertebra, known as the atlas, is positioned immediately beneath the skull. Unlike all other vertebrae that are held in place by interlocking with the vertebrae above and below, as well as being supported by surrounding soft-tissues, the atlas has no such interlocking system and relies simply on surrounding soft tissues to maintain alignment. As a result, the atlas is more vulnerable to displacement, especially given the weight of our heads. Due to the orientation of the atlas, which lies adjacent to the top of the spinal cord and below the lower brainstem, misalignment of the atlas can compromise nerves and blood vessels in the surrounding area. Compromising these structures has long been known by medical researchers as having an association with hypertension.

The results of the Rush University study, demonstrated that realigning the atlas vertebrae with a chiropractic adjustment had an average reduction of systolic blood pressure of 14 mm HG (top number in a blood pressure reading) and an average of 8 mm HG greater reduction in diastolic blood pressure (the bottom blood pressure reading), compared to the group of individuals that did not receive any chiropractic adjustments. The reduction in blood pressure was sustained for 8 weeks following the experiment and was measured to be equivalent to taking 2 blood pressure medications.

### **What does this all mean?**

New, sophisticated research is beginning to demonstrate what chiropractors have been witnessing clinically for years. Chiropractic adjustments not only restore proper motion to the spine, encouraging optimal mechanical functioning, but also work to restore compromised nerve function as well.

### **So, should I stop taking my blood pressure medication and see a chiropractor instead?**

Definitely NOT! However, chiropractic may be a good adjunct to your current hypertension routine, possibly helping reduce your blood pressure, while restoring proper spinal alignment, encouraging optimal nerve flow and simply making you feel better overall.