

As teachers, you have an overwhelming responsibility to your students and their future. You therefore owe it to yourself to take care of yourself and your future by living a lifestyle that supports a healthy mind, body and spirit. The first step to creating a healthier lifestyle should be to build a personalized “dream team” of health care professionals to guide you along the road to wellness. An integral part of the health and wellness team is the Doctor of Chiropractic (DC).

Chiropractors specialize in the examination, diagnosis and treatment of disorders of the nervous, muscular and skeletal systems and, more specifically, the interaction between these three systems of the body. There are



over 7,000 DCs in Canada and just over 100 in Nova Scotia, making chiropractic the third largest primary health care profession in the country. It takes at least seven years of post-secondary education (at least three years of an undergraduate degree followed by four years of chiropractic education at an accredited chiropractic college) to become a chiropractic doctor. While Doctors of Chiropractic are most often thought of as back or bone specialists, chiropractors take care of your entire body and are thoroughly trained in exercise therapy and nutritional counselling with the goal of supporting your overall health and wellness.

Teachers are prone to neuro-musculoskeletal disorders, specifically back and neck pain, due to the repetitive nature of the job. Long hours spent standing, followed by long hours at the computer or bent over a desk marking exams and tests, all place strain and stress on the spinal bones, muscles, ligaments and nerves. Holding your body in these postures for prolonged periods of time can lead to restricted movement or misalignments of the vertebrae which can irritate or pinch nerves as they exit the spinal canal. Because every tissue in the body is supplied by the nerves that originate at the spine, the effect of spinal misalignments can be far-reaching, causing less than optimal function of the muscles, skin and other organs supplied by branches of that particular nerve. The misalignment of the vertebrae and resultant nerve irritation is known as the Vertebral Subluxation Complex or, a subluxation for short.

Only a chiropractor has the education and tools to correct these spinal subluxations. Most often, chiropractors will use their hands to gently place a specifically-directed force through the effected vertebrae in the necessary direction required to correct the misalignment. This form of treatment is called Spinal Manipulative Therapy (SMT), but is commonly referred to as an adjustment.

Sometimes the chiropractor will choose to use other adjunctive therapies, such as various electromodalities (ultrasound, laser, TENs machines), acupuncture and soft tissue therapy (various massage techniques) to aid the healing process. The overall effect is decreased pain, improved range of motion, decreased disability and most importantly, the optimization of your overall health as your nervous system is restored.

It is very important to take care of your spine. The vertebrae of your spine are designed to protect the spinal cord, a bundle of nervous tissue that acts as a super highway along which messages are sent from the brain to the rest of the body, allowing our organs and tissues to function properly. Remember, you only have one spine, and that spine cannot be replaced like teeth, knees or hips. It is very important to practice good spinal hygiene for your overall health and wellness and good spinal hygiene begins with chiropractic care.

For more information on chiropractic care, or to find a chiropractor near you, visit the website of the Nova Scotia College of Chiropractors at [www.adjustyourview.com](http://www.adjustyourview.com).



*Dr. Kempt-Sutherland owns and operates Choice Chiropractic & Integrated Health Centre located in Dartmouth.*

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**KNOW?**

The Early Intervention Program (EIP) invites NSTU members to sign up for our Wellness email list at ***Be\_Well@nstu.ca***.

Please contact Erin at [ekeefe@nstu.ca](mailto:ekeefe@nstu.ca) to provide her with your NSTU email address. The ***Be\_Well@nstu.ca*** list will provide information about the EIP and other wellness topics.

