



# Wellness News Network™

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## Sitting Disease & How Chiropractic Can Help

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### Introduction

Sitting. Who knew something so seemingly innocent could, in many cases, contribute to poor health? Sitting itself is not a disease but when performed for prolonged periods (and without physical activity) it can lead to a wide variety of health problems, from heart disease to type 2 diabetes to weight gain to low back pain. The Mayo Clinic reports that 50 to 70 percent of people spend six or more hours sitting every day and that 20 to 35 percent of people spend four or more hours daily watching television.<sup>1</sup> Most of us sit for many hours every day, whether at work, in the car, while eating or while working on a computer. To achieve optimal health and avoid back pain or discomfort, it is important you talk with your chiropractor about effective strategies to help you sit less and move more.



back pain and postural problems.

Regardless of how you define it, sitting disease is having a significant negative effect on our health: According to the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (a study conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention), a sedentary lifestyle can significantly shorten life expectancy.<sup>2</sup> This study also notes that you can boost your life expectancy by 2 years by reducing your sitting time to less than 3 hours per day and by 1.4 years by keeping your TV time under 2 hours per day.

### What is Sitting Disease?

“Sitting Disease” is a new term used by many practitioners and experts in the medical and complementary alternative healthcare communities to describe the negative effects of long periods of physical inactivity or sedentary living. Some practitioners may use this term to refer exclusively to metabolic syndrome - a collection of risk factors that often occur together to boost your risk for type 2 diabetes, coronary artery disease and stroke - but many people apply this term in a more comprehensive manner to describe the full range of effects possible, including

### QUESTION:

The Mayo Clinic reports 50 to 70 % of people spend how many hours sitting each day?

- A) 6 or more
- B) 5 or more
- C) 4 or more

### ANSWER:

- A) 6

### TRUE OR FALSE:

People who follow recommended exercise guidelines are unlikely to be affected from prolonged sitting.

### ANSWER:

False

### QUESTION:

Sitting less than 3 hours per day can boost your life expectancy by how many years? injury?

- A) 3
- B) 2
- C) 1

### ANSWER:

D) all of the above

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the journal *European Endocrinology* states that meeting recommended physical activity and health guidelines is not enough. The authors of this study note that prolonged sitting (defined as time spent in behaviors involving minimal energy expenditure) can lead to cardiovascular and metabolic problems even in adults who meet recommended exercise guidelines.<sup>3</sup>

## Chiropractic to the Rescue!

Sitting for long periods can wreak havoc on your musculoskeletal system, as your body's joints and other tissues need to move to stay healthy. Reduced physical movement alters important physiological functions and can, over time, limit your joint range of motion. Chiropractic care is the perfect antidote to sitting disease.



Your chiropractor can provide you with acute care to help relieve your existing pain or discomfort and set you up with a long-term strategy that helps address some of the other health problems - weight gain, cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes - associated with prolonged periods of sitting. Your chiropractor can create for you a comprehensive treatment plan that incorporates key adjustments and soft tissue work, relevant physical therapy modalities and beneficial work and lifestyle modifications.

## Other Helpful Strategies

Because standing just a little more every day helps improve your muscle tone, boosts your circulation, fires up your metabolism and burns excess calories, your chiropractor may recommend the following strategies to help you sit less: Setting a timer at your desk that reminds you to stand every hour, walking while you are on the phone, purchasing a pedometer to count your steps and switching from traditional video games to ones that encourage movement or activity.



For eliminating back pain at work, many people find kneeling chairs beneficial. These chairs help reduce low back strain, ease tailbone pain and keep your spine in proper alignment. Using a variable height desk - a desk that can be raised or lowered to your desired height - is another effective strategy to help you sit less and reduce low back discomfort while at work.

Your chiropractor understands the importance of an active, healthy lifestyle and can work with you to find the most beneficial approach to limit sitting time. Ask your chiropractor what strategies are best for you.

## Quote to Inspire

*“To the  
discontented man  
no chair is easy.”*

*Benjamin Franklin*

## References and Sources:

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3. Dunstan DW, Healy GN, Sugiyama T, Owen N. Too much sitting and metabolic risk—has modern technology caught up with us? *European Endocrinology*. 2010; 6(1): 19-23.



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