

# What is ‘Wellness’?

Throughout my career I have always strived to be very thorough and detailed. I believe that “success is in the details,” so using the right words to describe the services you provide is critical. Unfortunately, I have seen many words used incorrectly in my profession. One such word is “wellness.”

I always felt “wellness” should not be used when describing only one service, or one type of healthcare discipline. Instead, wellness is integrated... meaning it’s more than just going to your doctor, or just seeing a chiropractor, or just going to a gym, or just trying to eat healthier. True “wellness” is a state of physical, nutritional and psychological balance that is only obtained by adopting and following a “wellness lifestyle” that incorporates all three components.

So I have decided that I will begin using “Health and Wellness Programs” in the explanation of my services, because that is truly what we provide – an integrated approach. But before making this decision I did some more research on what “wellness” is all about, and found an excellent article by Dr. David Seaman on the subject. His thoughts, which closely parallel mine, appeared in the July 2007 issue of Dynamic Chiropractic magazine.

## A State of Wellness

In contrast to “feelings of wellness,” true “wellness” is defined as a state of optimal physical and

mental function that is pursued by active lifestyle choices. If someone were to look on the Internet for the definition of wellness, they would definitely not discover that it is defined as “the outcome of a chiropractic spinal adjustment.”

What would they find? At [www.dictionary.com](http://www.dictionary.com) and in the American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, they would read that wellness is defined as: “The condition of good physical and mental health, especially when maintained by proper diet, exercise, and habits.” In the Merriam-Webster online dictionary ([www.merriam-webster.com](http://www.merriam-webster.com)), we read the following definition of wellness: “The quality or state of being in good health especially as an actively sought goal (via wellness clinics, lifestyles that promote wellness, etc.)” Clearly, “wellness” is something we can pursue via lifestyle, not something we have done to us by a chiropractor or any other doctor. Wellness is about eating right, exercising consistently, sleeping well, and developing healthy relationships. Certainly, pain reduction/elimination via the passively received chiropractic adjustment can help one to pursue wellness. In other words, if I wish to exercise and cannot, due to spinal pain and headaches, and am then relieved of said pain by an adjustment, I can pursue a regular exercise program if I choose.

## DR. PROODIAN’S PRESS



By Dr. James Proodian

### Chiropractic Wellness Care?

The term “chiropractic wellness care” is even odder, and is actually a physiological impossibility. This term suggests chiropractors are treating “well” spines. Our theoretic treatment goal is to reduce mechanical dysfunction with the adjustment. The presence of dysfunction/subluxation characterizes an “unwell” spine that should be adjusted, versus a “well” spine that should be left alone.

### Lack of Wellness Created by Poor Diet

Let us consider the disease promoting nature of the average American’s diet. About 72 percent of the calories in the average American’s diet come from foods that were not consumed by our recent hunter-gatherer ancestors. Consider that 23.9 percent come from grains (20.4 percent from refined grains), 18.6 percent from refined sugars, 17.6 percent from refined omega-6 seed oils (corn, soybean, sunflower, cottonseed, safflower, peanut, etc.), 10.6 percent from dairy, and about 1.4 percent from alcohol.

The remaining 28 percent come from a marginal intake of fruits, vegetables, nuts and legumes, and a substantial intake of domestic, feedlot, grain-fed meat. We know wild game is

about 2 percent to 4 percent fat by weight, while modern feedlot meat is 20 percent to 24 percent fat by weight. Essentially, this means we are eating unhealthy, obese animals.

In short, our diet in America today consists of grains, sugars, omega-6 fatty acids, trans fats, sugar and obese meat, and is substantially deficient in fruits and vegetables. The outcome of this pattern of eating is the typical inflamed, swollen looking, overweight American, who is prone to osteoporosis, osteoarthritis, chronic pain, and other chronic diseases. Now this patient walks into your office. It remains surprising to me when I witness this type of inflamed patient receive a chiropractic adjustment and derive a positive outcome (not all do, of course). Despite such an outcome, these patient will leave the office no more “well” than when they arrived. They are still inflamed, swollen, overweight and actively pursuing disease expression.

### Are you Going to a Real Wellness Center?

If you are going to a “wellness” center that provides dietary, exercise and other lifestyle recommendations, you could accurately call that office a wellness center. That is, you’re encouraged to pursue wellness as a lifestyle, and given guidance. If, however, you are provided with high-quality chiropractic adjustments and no mention of lifestyle modifications are made, then you are not at a wellness center. I think the latter office provides a valuable

service – just make sure to characterize the nature of the practice properly.

Lifestyle changes that decrease our chances of getting diseases like heart disease, type II diabetes, cancer, obesity, and high blood pressure make up a wellness approach to life. Choices we make every day are critical to adapting this type of lifestyle. Choosing a wellness center is as important if you are looking for the right information to help you and your family. Please check to see if what someone might be calling “wellness” falls short. It’s a hot word right now and a good place to start is to know the definition. Does your “wellness” provider know the definition they are claiming to provide?

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