

Osteopathic Manipulative Treatment

Who uses OMT?

All osteopathic physicians (D.O.s) from surgeons to family physicians are trained to use OMT to diagnose, treat and even prevent illness or injury. D.O.s are fully trained and licensed physicians able to perform surgery and prescribe medication. Sixty-four percent of D.O.s currently practice in the primary care areas of medicine although they can also be found practicing in other medical specialty areas such as cardiology and neurosurgery.

What is osteopathic manipulative treatment (OMT)?

OMT is a hands-on treatment where osteopathic physicians (D.O.s) use their hands to examine your back and other parts of your body such as joints, tendons, ligaments and muscles, for pain and restriction during motion that could signal an injury or impaired function.

What types of injuries or illnesses can OMT be used for?

OMT can be helpful in treating low back pain as well as relieving discomfort and/or musculoskeletal abnormalities associated with a number of disorders including asthma, carpal tunnel syndrome, menstrual pain, sinus disorders and migraines.

Who can benefit from OMT?

People of all ages have found relief from pain and dysfunction as well as improved mobility through OMT. Many D.O.s incorporate OMT into their treatment plans for top athletes, workers with on-the-job injuries and people with illnesses and injuries such as asthma and low back pain.

What is the difference between OMT and other forms of manipulation?

OMT, used to diagnose and treat injuries and illnesses, utilizes passive thrusting techniques but also includes a variety of non-thrusting methods designed to affect muscles and soft tissues. OMT also optimizes blood circulation to maintain and restore health while other forms of manipulation tend to focus more on spinal misalignment interfering with nerve transmission.

How is OMT prescribed?

A D.O.'s decision to use OMT is made on a visit-by-visit basis depending on the condition of the patient at the time of each visit. This leads to a significantly lower number of visits than other health care providers who use manipulation.

How is OMT performed?

Your structural exam will begin with an assessment of your posture, spine and balance. Your D.O. will then use his fingers to palpate your back and extremities. He will then check your joints for restriction and/or pain during motion and your muscles, tendons and ligaments where tenderness can signal a problem. Using a variety of OMT techniques, your D.O. will apply manual forces to your body's affected areas to treat structural abnormalities and will then apply specific corrective forces to relieve joint restrictions and misalignments. Based upon the complexity or severity of your problem, you may require more than one treatment.

D.O.s: Physicians Treating People, Not Just Symptoms

 AMERICAN OSTEOPATHIC ASSOCIATION



Does managed care cover OMT?

OMT is an added treatment tool that is covered by many managed care organizations. Typically, the physician and the managed care plan negotiate the level of reimbursement.

Study in *New England Journal of Medicine* shows OMT to be effective

A study published in the November 4, 1999 issue of the *New England Journal of Medicine* shows OMT to be an effective form of medical treatment and with lower costs and fewer side effects. Patients participating in the study were divided into two groups. One group was treated with standard options for low back pain such as anti-inflammatory medication, active physical therapy and hot/cold packs. Patients in the other group were treated with standard care and OMT. The study showed that both groups improved over a 12-week period. However, the patients who received OMT required significantly less medication and used less therapy, resulting in lower costs and fewer side effects.

To Find a D.O. who uses OMT in your area, call or write:

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The American Osteopathic Association acknowledges the contributions made to the OMT Fact Sheet by the American Academy of Osteopathy (www.academyofosteopathy.org) and the American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians (www.acofp.org).