

## Is Patient Education Worth the Time?

By Dr. David Bohn, DC

Chiropractors will talk about educating patients and never question that an educated patient is more likely to begin care and then stick with a recommended care plan. When many chiropractors elect to educate their patients they usually fail to do it in a creative way that attracts and holds attention, answers the questions that really need answered, yet do not nag or annoy their patient.

People today are not like the patients of the 1980's. Attention spans are shorter, information on any topic is available with just the click of a mouse, and the competition to be noticed and heard is fierce.

This presents a dilemma. If we all agree that when our patient is educated about their problem, and the solution we are offering results in a less stressful Practice for us, *and* a better outcome for the patient, why isn't this happening?

Perhaps I can offer an example from my own life to help illustrate.

As an undergraduate college student I drank and apparently enjoyed low cost beer, sometimes to excess. I knew very little about how beer was brewed and really wouldn't have cared to have it explained. Beer was important to me for the same reasons it is to all 21-year-old men. In chiropractic school a friend of mine introduced me to home brewing. I read every book I could find, spoke with people in the local shop that sold home brewing supplies and eventually mastered understood the importance of understanding the importance of balling degrees and

terminal gravity. As years past my interest and understanding in beer grew to the point that I cannot bring myself to drink a can of mass produced swill that many people find so satisfying.

Well enough about beer, here's the moral to the story. The more you learn about something, the more interested you become in it and the more of it you begin to buy. You buy more and become more loyal to it until you become a valuable lifetime customer of the product. I will admit to you, I am now a loyal lifetime Samuel Smith's Oatmeal Stout raving-fan, although I still enjoy experiencing fine microbrews as I travel. Applying this to chiropractic means that the better you educate your patient, the better client they will be, the more loyal they will be to your practice, the more money they will spend, and most importantly the better they will be able to explain your practice and what you do to their friends and family. This means you will get more referrals and have a better, less stressful practice.

It all comes down to increasing the value of each patient. Not just for 18-24 visits but for the lifetime of that patient, for the referrals and the new problems they may have over their lifetime.

Patient education;

1. Increases the number of internal referrals your practice receives.
2. Increases the PVA (patient visit average) of each patient because educated patients comprehend the value of chiropractic.
3. Educated patients understand the value of maintenance.
4. They are more likely to remain long term patients in your practice and educated patients are less concerned about fees.

My personal favorite example of quality, creative patient education is my take home report of findings. This would include copies of the patient's x-rays with lines drawn on it demonstrating the patient's biomechanical faults, pictures of the patient performing each range of motion, posture analysis showing the patient the abnormalities, a listing of their subluxated segments with the corresponding affected organs and muscles, and a financial case presentation. I also like to provide the patient a copy of their first visit note in narrative

format. This take home report allows the patient to fully understand and share their problem and my solutions with everyone.

Dr. David Bohn, DC is the founder of <http://www.chiroconceptions.com> and has been practicing chiropractic since 1988. For more information on software and other tools to increase your practice visit our website or call 301-777-3710 for more information.