

Maine Veterinary Medical Association

97A Exchange Street, Suite 305

Portland, ME 04101

Phone: 800-448-2772

www.mainevetmed.org

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Comparison of different specialties human focus versus animal			
Professional Role	Human Specialist Training Focus	Veterinary Specialist Training Focus	Why Human Specialists Do NOT Work on Animals (Even Within Their Specialty)
Radiologist	Human anatomy, disease imaging, and interpretation only	Species-specific anatomy, disease, and imaging techniques	Vast anatomical differences, disease presentations, and imaging protocols differ by species; misinterpretation risks harm
Neurologist	Human nervous system anatomy, diseases, and treatment	Veterinary neuroanatomy, species-specific diagnostics and therapies	Different neuroanatomy and clinical signs; treatment varies widely; cross-species care risks misdiagnosis and injury
Surgeon	Human surgical anatomy, techniques, anesthesia, and recovery	Species-specific surgical anatomy, procedures, anesthesia	Anatomical and physiological differences; anesthesia and drug responses vary; human surgical skills don't translate to animals safely
Chiropractor	Human musculoskeletal anatomy, manipulation, and clinical care	Veterinary medical training plus animal chiropractic techniques	Animal biomechanics differ radically; human chiropractic training doesn't cover animal anatomy, pathology, or handling
Optometrist	Human eye anatomy and vision correction	Veterinary ophthalmology and species-specific eye care	Eye anatomy and diseases vary; treatment and diagnostics are species-specific; human optometry skills don't transfer safely
Ophthalmologist	Medical and surgical eye care for humans	Veterinary medical and surgical eye care for animals	Species differences in eye structure and pathology; surgical techniques differ; unsafe for humans to treat animals without vet training

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Comparative education for veterinary animal chiropractor vs. human animal chiropractor			
Area of Training	Veterinarian (DVM) + Animal Chiropractic Course	Human Chiropractor + Animal Chiropractic Course	Why This Matters
Animal Anatomy	600–1,000+ hours vet school + 30–50 hours course	30–50 hours total (course only)	Veterinarians have 20–30× more anatomy training before course, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Species-specific detail • Full cadaver dissection • Neuro & visceral anatomy
Physiology	300–500 hours vet school + 10–20 hours course	10–20 hours total	Vets understand normal and abnormal animal function
Disease / Pathology	500–700+ hours vet school + 5–15 hours course	5–15 hours total	Chiropractors lack training to detect hidden systemic disease
Diagnostics	Hundreds of hours including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Radiology • Lab interpretation • Neurologic localization 	Minimal to none	Safe treatment requires diagnostic competence
Clinical Training	2+ years supervised clinical rotations + hands-on chiropractic labs	Short technique-focused labs only	No training in managing complications or systemic disease
Total Animal Medical Education	Thousands of hours + chiropractic certification	210 hours total animal-focused training	Chiropractic course is a supplement, not a substitute for veterinary training

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Summary of Animal Diseases that can present as muscle and joint stiffness

Disease / Condition	Species	Cause	Chiropractic Solutions?	Survival Without Vet Care	Zoonotic?	Reportable in Maine?
Tetanus	Horses, Cattle, Dogs	<i>Clostridium tetani</i> neurotoxin	No — systemic toxin disease; chiropractic will not help	Days-weeks (usually fatal without treatment)	No	No
Equine Polysaccharide Storage Myopathy (PSSM)	Horses	Genetic/metabolic	Yes — symptom management only	Chronic, lifelong	No	No
Rhabdomyolysis (Exertional Myopathy)	Horses, Dogs	Muscle damage from exertion	Yes — symptom support only	Days-weeks (risk of severe complications)	No	No
Torn Muscle (Muscle Rupture/Strain)	Various	Trauma or overuse	No — chiropractic can worsen acute tears	Variable, dependent on severity	No	No
Hypocalcemia (Milk Fever)	Dairy Cattle	Low blood calcium	No — metabolic disease; no benefit from chiropractic	Hours-days (medical emergency)	No	No
Hypomagnesemia (Grass Tetany)	Cattle	Low magnesium	No — metabolic disease; no benefit from chiropractic	Hours-days (medical emergency)	No	No
Botulism	Horses, Cattle, Birds	<i>Clostridium botulinum</i> toxin	No — neurotoxin disease; chiropractic contraindicated	Days-weeks (high mortality)	No	Yes

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Disease / Condition	Species	Cause	Chiropractic Solutions?	Survival Without Vet Care	Zoonotic?	Reportable in Maine?
Myositis (Infectious/Immune-mediated)	Various	Infection or autoimmune	No — chiropractic may worsen inflammation	Variable, often days-weeks	Depends on cause	Depends on cause
Laminitis (Secondary stiffness)	Horses	Hoof inflammation	Yes — can support secondary musculoskeletal stiffness only	Variable, chronic	No	No
Broken Bones (Fractures)	Various	Trauma	No — chiropractic can worsen fractures	Days-weeks (depends on fracture severity)	No	No
Torn Tendons / Ligaments	Horses, Dogs	Trauma or overuse	No — chiropractic can worsen tendon/ligament injuries	Variable, depends on severity	No	No
Colic (Abdominal Pain)	Horses	Various (GI obstruction, etc.)	No — emergency medical condition; chiropractic contraindicated	Hours-days (can be fatal if untreated)	No	No
Kidney Disease (Renal failure)	Various	Chronic disease, toxins	No — internal disease; chiropractic no benefit	Weeks-months (progressive)	No	No
Equine Protozoal Myeloencephalitis (EPM)	Horses	<i>Sarcocystis neurona</i> protozoa	No — neurologic infection; chiropractic contraindicated	Weeks-months (without treatment)	No	No

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Disease / Condition	Species	Cause	Chiropractic Solutions?	Survival Without Vet Care	Zoonotic?	Reportable in Maine?
Wobbler Syndrome	Horses, Dogs	Cervical spinal cord compression	No — spinal cord disease; chiropractic contraindicated	Variable, progressive	No	No
Equine Herpesvirus Myeloencephalopathy	Horses	Equine herpesvirus-1	No — viral neurologic infection; chiropractic contraindicated	Days-weeks (highly fatal untreated)	No	Yes
Canine Distemper Virus	Dogs	Viral infection	No — viral neurologic disease; chiropractic contraindicated	Weeks (often fatal untreated)	No	No
Rabies	Various mammals	Rabies virus	No — fatal viral neurologic disease; chiropractic contraindicated	Days (fatal)	Yes	Yes
Neosporosis	Cattle, Dogs	<i>Neospora caninum</i> protozoa	No — protozoal neurologic disease; chiropractic contraindicated	Variable	No	No
Tick Paralysis	Dogs, Horses, Cattle	Neurotoxin from tick saliva	No — toxin-mediated neurologic disease; chiropractic contraindicated	Days (recovery after tick removal)	No	No
Listeriosis (Circling Disease)	Ruminants	<i>Listeria monocytogenes</i>	No — bacterial neurologic infection;	Days-weeks	Yes	Yes

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Disease / Condition	Species	Cause	Chiropractic Solutions?	Survival Without Vet Care	Zoonotic?	Reportable in Maine?
			chiropractic contraindicated			
Granulomatous Meningoencephalitis (GME)	Dogs	Immune-mediated inflammation	No — immune neurologic disease; chiropractic contraindicated	Variable	No	No
Hydrocephalus	Dogs, Cats	Abnormal CSF accumulation	No — congenital neurologic disorder; chiropractic contraindicated	Variable	No	No
Intervertebral Disc Disease (IVDD)	Dogs	Disc herniation	No — chiropractic can worsen spinal cord compression	Variable, progressive	No	No
Polyradiculoneuritis (Coons Tail Paralysis)	Dogs	Immune-mediated inflammation	No — immune neurologic disease; chiropractic contraindicated	Weeks-months	No	No
Muscular Dystrophy	Various	Genetic degenerative disease	No — genetic disease; chiropractic contraindicated	Variable, progressive	No	No
Hypothyroidism	Dogs	Thyroid deficiency	No — endocrine disease; chiropractic no benefit	Chronic	No	No

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Electrolyte Imbalances	Various	Abnormal minerals	No — metabolic disease; chiropractic no benefit	Variable	No	No
Toxicities (organophosphates, heavy metals)	Various	Exposure to toxins	No — toxin-mediated disease; chiropractic contraindicated	Variable	Yes (some)	Yes (some)
Stroke (Cerebrovascular Accident)	Dogs, Cats	Vascular brain ischemia	No — neurologic vascular disease; chiropractic contraindicated	Variable	No	No
Neoplasia (Brain or Spinal Tumors)	Various	Tumor growth	No — neoplastic neurologic disease; chiropractic contraindicated	Variable	No	No
Strangles (<i>Streptococcus equi</i>)	Horses	Bacterial infection	No — infectious disease needing medical treatment	Days-weeks	Rare but Yes	Yes
Pseudorabies (Aujeszky's Disease)	Swine, Cattle, Other mammals	Suid herpesvirus (Aujeszky's virus)	No — fatal neurologic disease; chiropractic contraindicated	Days	Yes	Yes

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Survey on providing a referral for animal chiropractic care

After a physical exam and at the request of a client, would

you potentially be willing to provide a referral to a chiropractor

who has completed an accredited animal chiropractic training program?

Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	47.13%	41
No	33.33%	29
Unsure	19.54%	17
Answered		87
Skipped		0

Do you work at an emergency or urgent care facility?

Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	24.14%	21
No	75.86%	66
Answered		87
Skipped		0