

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Proper Mattress Can Improve Sleep Comfort, Reduce Pain Says American Chiropractic Association**

*Corvallis, OR.* – A good night’s sleep is an essential part of a healthy lifestyle; however, an estimated 70 million Americans complain of sleeplessness. This October, during National Chiropractic Month, the American Chiropractic Association (ACA) is offering advice to help Americans select not only the most comfortable mattress and pillow, but also one that can help limit unnecessary back and neck pain.

“Americans spend one-third of their lives sleeping, and so it makes sense to invest in a sleep set that can improve your comfort and overall health,” says Dr. Larry Oliver of Heresco Chiropractic & Associates in Corvallis and a member of the American Chiropractic Association. “Many people may not realize that the reason for their joint pain is literally right underneath them—the age and condition of their mattress and pillow.”

A study published in the *Journal of Chiropractic Medicine* showed that sleeping on a new mattress can significantly reduce stiffness and back pain. Researchers found that study participants reported immediate and sustained benefits after sleeping on a new mattress, regardless of their age or weight. This was especially true of participants who entered the study with back pain complaints, as they reported a 63 percent improvement in back discomfort with a new mattress.

When it comes time to purchase a new mattress, Dr. Oliver and ACA recommend the following:

### **Shop for Support**

Look for a mattress that provides uniform support from head to toe; if there are gaps between your body and the mattress (such as at the waist), you’re not getting the full support you need. Mattresses can be too firm; pay close attention to uncomfortable pressure on prominent body features such as the shoulders, hips and low back.

### **Shop for Comfort**

When mattress shopping, give each option a good trial run before you buy; lie down on a mattress for a minimum of five to 10 minutes to get a good idea of its comfort level—sitting on it simply won’t do. If you cannot find a comfortable position no matter how you lie, you probably have the wrong mattress.

## **Shop for Size**

Does the bed provide enough room to stretch and roll over? Is the bed long enough and is there enough room to accommodate children or pets? If you have a sleeping partner, there should be ample room for both people to toss and turn as needed. The ideal mattress will minimize the transfer of movement from one sleeping partner to the other, which means one person shouldn't feel motion as the other leaves the bed.

Generally, a mattress should be replaced every 5 to 8 years to ensure proper support and comfort. Tossing and turning or waking up uncomfortable is evidence that it's time for a new mattress, Dr. Oliver notes, and be aware that life's changes can signal the need for a new mattress as well. For example, people who have lost or gained a considerable amount of weight, those who have a medical condition which has changed the way they sleep, or even those who've changed partners may need to consider a new mattress.

When selecting a new pillow, Dr. Oliver recommends selecting one with ergonomically-designed features, which will enhance comfort and limit pain. Look for pillows that are:

- Designed to keep the spine in natural alignment. When lying on your side, your head and neck should remain level with your mid and lower spine. When lying on your back, your head and neck should remain level with your upper back and spine. In other words, avoid pillows that are so thick or thin that they angle your head and neck away from your body.
- Designed to support different sleep positions, including side sleeper or back sleeper. (It's best never to sleep on your stomach, as it's the most back unfriendly sleeping position.)
- Hypoallergenic.

There is no such thing as a universal fit when it comes to pillows, Dr. Oliver notes. "Find a pillow that is consistent with the shape and size of your body. If you find yourself sleeping on your side with one hand propped under your pillow, that's a clue that you're not getting the support you need from that pillow," he explains.

This October, during National Chiropractic Month, talk with a doctor of chiropractic about any pain or discomfort that prevents you from achieving a restful night's sleep.

Dr. Oliver is working in collaboration with the American Chiropractic Association to observe National Chiropractic Month. For more information on chiropractic or any of the tips mentioned above contact Dr. Larry Oliver at (541) 757-9933 or visit the ACA Web site: [www.ACAtoday.org](http://www.ACAtoday.org).