The effects of spinal manipulation have been shown to include:

- Temporary relief of musculoskeletal pai n
- Shortened time to recover from acute back pain
- Temporary increase in passive range of motion (ROM)
- Physiological effects on the central nervous system, probably at the segmental level
- Altered sensorimotor integration
- No alteration of the position of the sacroiliac joint

Common side effects of spinal manipulation are characterized as mild to moderate and may include: local discomfort, headache, tiredness, or radiating discomfort.

The degree of serious risks associated with manipulation of the cervical spine is uncertain, with little evidence of risk of harm but also little evidence of safety either.

Serious complications after manipulation of the cervical spine are estimated to be 0.25 to 2 in a million manipulations. Neck manipulation is believed to account for 6-9% of cervical artery dissections . A patient requesting a cervical spine manipulation must understand these risks properly prior to

undergoing a manipulation.