



SPINE & JOINT CLINIC  
ORANGE COUNTY

## Functional vs Conventional Medicine

In conventional medicine, there's a doctor for every part of your body: cardiologists for the heart, gastroenterologists for the digestive system, neurologists for the brain and nervous system, podiatrists for your feet, and ophthalmologists for your eyes. Due to this siloing, conventional medicine focuses on individual body systems, but does not look at the whole person to understand the interrelated causes underlying disease and chronic illness. Rather, it looks at symptoms in order to name a disease and find a corresponding drug.

In functional medicine, we see the body as an interconnected whole, within a larger environment. We recognize that in order to treat one part of the body, all other parts must also be considered. This breaks apart artificial divisions of the body. Functional medicine looks at underlying phenomena that occur across specialties (inflammation, oxidative stress, toxicities, cellular energy problems, etc.) in order to understand the root cause of disease and find the right tools, at the right time, individualized for each person.

The table below compares eight key distinctions between functional and conventional medicine.

Functional Medicine	Conventional Medicine
Health oriented	Disease oriented
Patient centered	Doctor centered
Biochemical individuality	Everyone is treated the same way
Holistic	Specialized
Cost Effective	Expensive
Looks at underlying causes of disease	Diagnosis based on symptoms
Preventative approach	Early detection of disease
High touch/high tech	High tech