

COSTOCHONDRITIS

(Tietze's Syndrome)

NOLENSVILLE FAMILY MEDICINE
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BASIC INFORMATION

DESCRIPTION

An inflammation of the cartilage of one or more ribs, most commonly the second or third ribs. The pain that results is often increased by movements that change the position of the ribs, such as lying down, bending over, coughing, or sneezing. Pain may mimic that of heart disease or digestive disorders. It is more common in young adults, but can occur in any age group. The term Tietze syndrome is often used for costochondritis.

FREQUENT SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

- Pain in the chest wall, usually sharp in nature.
- Pain worsens with movement.
- Pain may occur in more than one location and may radiate into the arm.
- Tightness in the chest.
- Affected area is sensitive to the touch.

CAUSES

Inflammation (soreness and swelling) of the cartilage where the ribs attach to the sternum. The cause of the inflammation is often unknown.

RISK INCREASES WITH

- Trauma, such as a severe blow to the chest.
- Unusual physical activity.
- Upper respiratory infection.

PREVENTIVE MEASURES

Avoid activities that may strain or cause trauma to the rib cage.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Complete healing. The disorder is benign and the course is usually of a short duration.

POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS

None likely.



DIAGNOSIS & TREATMENT

GENERAL MEASURES

- Your health care provider will do a physical exam and ask questions about your symptoms. There is no specific test that can diagnose costochondritis. An x-ray or bone scan may be done to rule out other disorders.
- Use a heating pad or ice massage on the affected area. Use the one that feels better for you.
- Avoid sudden movements that will intensify the pain.
- Gently stretching the chest muscles several times a day may be helpful.

MEDICATIONS

- Mild pain drugs, such as aspirin or ibuprofen, may help relieve discomfort.
- Stronger pain drugs or steroid injections may be prescribed, but these are rarely needed.

ACTIVITY

Activities may need to be limited until symptoms improve. Get extra rest when you are able to.

DIET

No special diet.



NOTIFY OUR OFFICE IF

- You or a family member has symptoms of costochondritis.
- Pain continues or gets worse after treatment.

Special notes:

More notes on the back of this page