

COSTOCHONDRITIS

(Tietze's Syndrome)



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 intensified by movements that change the position of the ribs, such as lying down, bending over, coughing or sneezing. Pain may mimic that of coronary artery disease. The disorder is more common in young adults, but can occur in any age group.

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 of the cartilage that attaches ribs to the sternum.
- 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

Avoidance of 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.



TREATMENT

GENERAL MEASURES

- Rest.
- Heating pad or ice massage applied to the affected area.
- Avoidance of sudden movements that will intensify the pain.

MEDICATIONS

- Mild pain medications, such as aspirin, acetaminophen or ibuprofen, may help relieve discomfort.
- Stronger pain medicines may be prescribed.
- Steroid injections may have to be prescribed for some patients.

ACTIVITY

As tolerated.

DIET

No special diet.



NOTIFY OUR OFFICE IF

- You or a family member has symptoms of costochondritis.
- New or unexplained symptoms develop. Drugs used in treatment may cause side effects.