



CHADSTONE

REGION

OSTEOPATHY

Costochondritis

Costochondritis is the inflammation of the cartilage that connects the ribs to your sternum (breastbone). It often affects the upper and middle ribs on either side of the sternum that may radiate to the back or abdomen. This condition usually takes a few weeks to get better, however it can sometimes last longer. It most commonly affects young people, especially teenagers and young adults.

Symptoms of costochondritis can vary from person to person. It may include:

- Achy, sharp or stabbing pain.
- Pain is worse with movement such as lifting an arm or exertion.
- Pain with coughing, sneezing or deep breathing.
- Pain when lying on the painful side.
- Pain on the left side that may be affecting more than one rib.
- Placing pressure on the chest by either using a seatbelt or hugging someone.

People who carry or lift heavy objects in an awkward way are at higher risk of developing costochondritis. This causes an increase in stress and tension on the surrounding muscles and joints of the chest. Exercising with poor technique or lifting heavier weight than one should may also cause costochondritis. This places force through the arms and then into the chest creating increased tension through the muscular chain. Exercises such as press ups, bench press, planking or sudden movements in tennis can do this. Chronic stiffness through the spinal joints may also cause costochondritis. The slow repetitive stress placed on the cartilage overloads the tissue and causes the build up of tension. This can then cause pain.

Costochondritis may also develop from lung conditions or allergies that cause excessive or persistent severe coughing, sneezing or deep breathing. These repetitive rib movements increase pressure inside the chest wall and lead to inflammation and strain on rib cartilages. Another cause of costochondritis can be trauma. This can be assault to the chest, falling against a table, hard footy tackle or a car accident whereby the chest hits the steering wheel or airbag. These sorts of traumas cause a lot of stress on the chest and lead to an inflammatory response which causes pain.

People with costochondritis often have a arched upper back with rounded shoulders. This type of posture places increased pressure on the cartilage on the front of the chest, therefore creating pain. If this posture isn't adjusted or strengthened, costochondritis may not recover by itself.

Osteopathy treatment through hands on techniques can help ease some of the pain and help mobilise the joints and ribs that may be affected. They will also provide exercises to stretch and strengthen the weak and unconditioned muscles and joints to reduce the pressure this condition has on them. Additionally, they will

advise you upon medications or any other relevant interventions such as applying heat to the affected area, for your case.

Information sourced from: <https://osteogoodhealth.com/costochondritis/> and <https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/costochondritis>

Information compiled by Dr Eliza Clark (Osteopath)