Thoracic Strain

You have injured your muscles or tendons that attach to the upper part of the back behind your chest. This injury is called a thoracic strain, thoracic sprain, or mid-back strain.

CAUSES

The cause of the strain varies from pulling a muscle or tendon fibers without tearing them, to the more severe injury or rupture of muscle and tendons. With less severe injuries, there may be little loss of strength. Sometimes there are fractures of the bones to which these muscles are attached. Long standing strains may be caused by overuse. Sudden strains may occur with injury.

SYMPTOMS

The main symptoms are usually pain with movement. Some causes of pain include:

- Working out.
- Poor nutrition.
- Being very overweight (*obesity*).
- Other back injuries.

DIAGNOSIS

You can usually tell what is wrong by having an x-ray and a physical examination.

TREATMENT

- Physical therapy may be helpful for recovery. Your caregiver can give you exercises to do or refer you to a physical therapist.
- Strengthening and conditioning programs appropriate for your sport or occupation may be helpful.
- Warm up before physical activities or athletics.

If this is your first-time injury, proper care and proper healing time before starting activities should prevent long term problems. Torn ligaments and tendons require as long to heal as broken bones. Average healing times may be only a week for a mild strain. For torn muscles and tendons healing time may be up to 6 weeks to 2 months .

HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS

- Apply ice to the sore area for 15 to 20 minutes, 4 times per day, for the first 2 days. Put the ice in a plastic bag and place a towel between the bag of ice and your skin. Ice massages may also be used for 15 to 20 minutes four times per day or as directed.
- Take medications as directed by your caregiver. Only take over-the-counter or prescription medicines for pain, discomfort, or fever as directed by your caregiver.
- Keep your appointments for physical therapy if this was prescribed.
- Use wraps and back braces as instructed.

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF:

- You have an increase in bruising, swelling, or pain.
- Pain relief has not improved with medications.
- Problems seem to be getting worse rather than better.

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