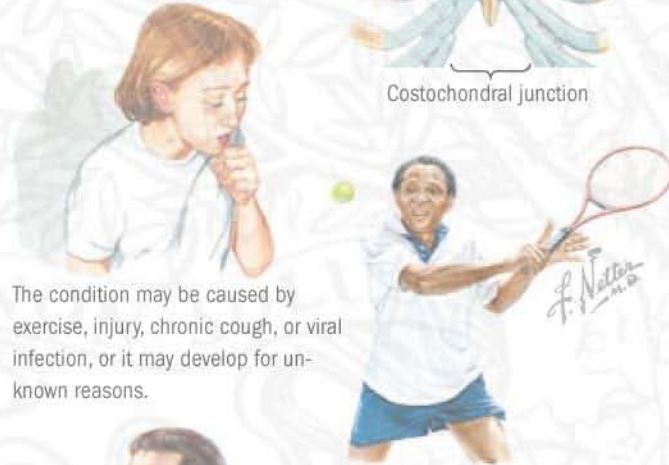


MANAGING YOUR COSTOCHONDRITIS

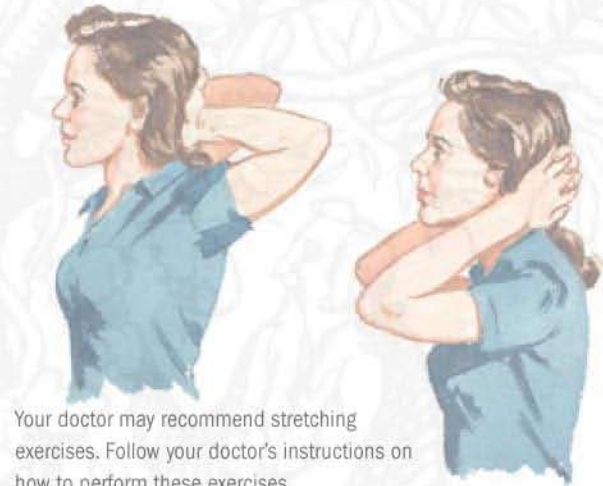
The ribs connect to the sternum (breastbone) by cartilage, a thick elastic tissue. This connection is called the costochondral junction, a joining of bone and cartilage. Costochondritis is pain and tenderness in this part of the chest.



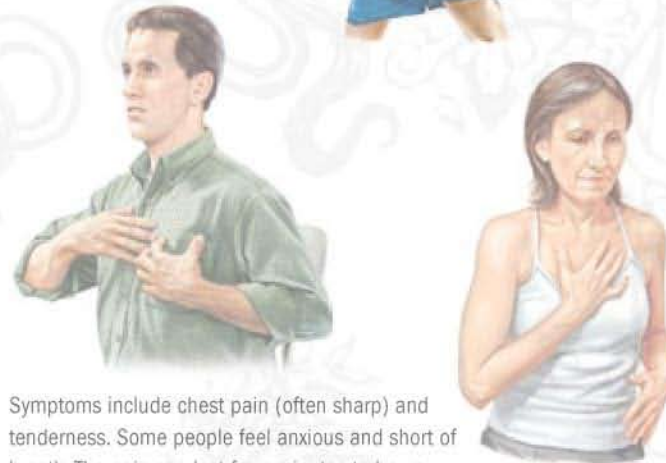
Costochondritis may last several months. It first gets better and then goes away, with or without treatment. NSAIDs such as ibuprofen may be especially helpful. Cortisone injections might be tried if other treatments don't work.



The condition may be caused by exercise, injury, chronic cough, or viral infection, or it may develop for unknown reasons.



Your doctor may recommend stretching exercises. Follow your doctor's instructions on how to perform these exercises.



Symptoms include chest pain (often sharp) and tenderness. Some people feel anxious and short of breath. The pain can last from minutes to hours.



Using a heating pad also helps take the pain away. But don't use a heating pad more than three times a day or for more than 20 minutes at a time. You could get burned.

Don't use oils or creams with a heating pad. The pain could get worse or you could get burned.



Don't exercise until your pain is completely gone and your doctor says that it's OK.



Your doctor makes a diagnosis from a medical history and physical examination, which often shows tenderness over the cartilage.