

Ask the Nurse Practitioner



Costochondritis

Q: I have been diagnosed with Costochondritis. Can I continue to work, as my job is somewhat physical?

A: If you can rest the injured area of the chest wall, you should be able to work. For example, if you have a left-sided chest wall injury, try using your right arm and hand throughout the day.

Q: Can I get Costochondritis a second time?

A: Although it is a self-limited condition, it is a potentially recurrent to a weakened cartilage junction.

Q: I've had a cough, and I have pain in my ribs. Isn't this usually pneumonia?

A: Without a complete workup, one cannot assume that those symptoms will lead to pneumonia. A complete assessment should be performed to determine the etiology of the pain.

Chest Wall Pain - Costochondritis

By Patricia Smith, FNP – Knoxville, TN

Any type of chest pain should be taken seriously and evaluated by a healthcare professional. Chest pain can have many causes, including cardiac, musculoskeletal, gastrointestinal, psychogenic (anxiety related), pulmonary, vascular and neurologic. A condition that is often seen in occupational health medicine is Costochondritis. This is defined as anterior chest wall pain that occurs as a result of inflammation of the junctions of the cartilage of the ribs. Costochondritis can mimic the signs of a heart attack in that there is sharp chest pain, the pain can radiate down an arm and there is chest tightness. The diagnosis of Costochondritis is made by excluding all other contributing factors, the presence of tenderness at Costochondral junctions and worsening pain with movement and breathing.

Some of the risk factors for costochondritis include:

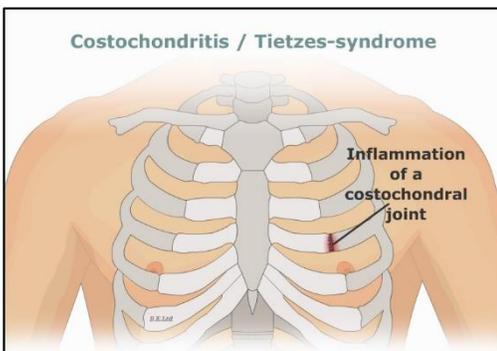
- Unusual physical activity or overuse (softball, throwing a tarp over a truck)
- Recent trauma (motor vehicle accident)
- Recent Upper Respiratory Infection (chronic cough, most common)
- Sudden changes in physical activity

A chest x-ray will be normal with this condition, and the only lab that will be unusual is the erythrocyte sedimentation rate. Most often, imaging and labs are not performed unless the provider is considering other reasons for the chest pain (pneumonia, heart attack, shingles).

Treatment:

- Self-limiting, but can last weeks to months
- Heat
- Rest
- NSAIDS: Acetaminophen, Ibuprofen, Naproxen and Diclofenac.

You can reduce your chances of Costochondritis by avoiding sudden, physical changes as well as repetitive motion. See your health care professional if you have a chronic cough. Have a list of your medications and know your family medical history.



Seasonal Allergies - Allergic Rhinitis

By Jeff Owen, FNP – Oklahoma City, TN

Spring is right around the corner! Like most, you probably have plans to clean out the flower beds and prepare your lawn for summertime fun with family and friends. Based on where you live, you may be susceptible to Allergic Rhinitis, commonly known as, Seasonal Allergies or Hay Fever. Allergic Rhinitis is a condition that affects 40-60 million Americans.

There are two different forms of Allergic Rhinitis:

- **Seasonal:** Symptoms usually occur in spring, summer and early fall. They are usually caused by exposure to mold spores or to pollens from grass, trees and weeds.
- **Perennial:** Symptoms occur throughout the year. Perennial symptoms are generally caused by dust mites, pet hair or dander, cockroaches and/or mold.

Some people experience both types of rhinitis, with perennial symptoms getting worse during times of high pollen.

Seasonal Allergy / Allergic Rhinitis Symptoms: Runny nose, Itchy eyes, Sneezing, Stuffy nose, and possible Fatigue due to poor sleep as a result of a stuffy nose.

Seasonal Allergy Triggers:

- *Outdoor allergens* - pollens from grass, trees and weeds.
- *Indoor allergens* - pet hair or dander, dust mites and mold.
- *Irritants* - cigarette smoke, perfume and diesel exhaust.

Seasonal Allergy Management and Treatment:

Avoid known allergens. Keep windows closed during high pollen alerts. Use the air conditioning in your vehicle and home. You can help control allergy symptoms with prescription and/or over-the-counter medications.

- **Intranasal corticosteroids** are the single, most effective drug class for treating allergic rhinitis. They help to reduce nasal congestion.
- **Decongestants** are effective in reducing nasal swelling and congestion. However, they can raise your blood pressure. Talk to your Urgent Care Travel Provider before taking a decongestant if you have high blood pressure.
- **Antihistamines** are effective in reducing itchy, watery eyes, sneezing, eye drops, nasal spray and oral medications. Patients respond differently to antihistamines.

Talk with your Urgent Care Travel Provider about what treatment options are most appropriate and safe for you while at home and driving over-the-road.

Important precautions:

- Follow your Provider's instructions.
- Alcohol and tranquilizers increase the sedation side effects of antihistamines.
- Know how the medication affects you before working with heavy machinery, driving or other tasks that require high concentration; some medications can slow your reaction time.

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Road to Better Health is a new publication designed to provide you with relevant health and wellness information. We seek your input and comments to improve the newsletter.

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The Wellness Corner: Smart Snack Recipe – Oven Roasted Chickpeas

Finding good options for healthy snacking can be challenging but planning and preparing snacks ahead of time will help you eat better and save money. This oven-roasted chickpea recipe is high in protein and fiber to help keep you feeling full longer. It can be made with a variety of different seasoning blends to keep your snacking interesting. Store in snack-sized, plastic, ziplock bags for easy munching on the road.

Ingredients:

- 1 (15-ounce) can chickpeas (*garbanzo beans*)
- 1 Tablespoon olive oil
- Seasoning (see some options below)

Directions:

Preheat oven to 400F degrees. Line a large baking sheet with foil or parchment paper.

Rinse chickpeas in a large strainer removing skins that may have fallen off of beans.



Drain thoroughly and spread chickpeas onto a paper towel. Blot them until they are very dry. Spread them out onto lined baking sheet. Put chickpeas into the oven and roast for 20-30 minutes being sure to jiggle pan once or twice so beans brown evenly and don't burn. After 20-30 minutes, remove from oven and drizzle with 1 Tablespoon of Olive Oil, mixing the beans around to make sure they are all evenly coated. Sprinkle seasoning mix over beans and mix well to heavily coat each bean. Place back into the oven and roast for another 15 minutes. Check to be sure chickpeas have browned before shutting off the oven. Leave chickpeas in oven and crack door slightly allowing chickpeas to cool in oven completely before removing. This will help them get crunchier. Once cooled completely, store in airtight container or ziplock bag at room temperature.

This recipe can be doubled but do not crowd chickpeas on baking sheet to ensure proper browning (use two pans or do in two batches).

Seasoning Options:

Be Creative! There are so many delicious combinations of sweet or savory seasonings that can be customized to your taste buds. Try mixing/matching the following:

Savory: salt, garlic powder, cayenne, cumin, coriander, chipotle powder, smoky seasoning, paprika, chili powder, pepper, cilantro, sage, wasabi, horseradish, fennel seed, Garam Masala

Sweet: sugar (white or brown), cinnamon, allspice, ginger, peanut flour, nutmeg



About UrgentCareTravel

UrgentCareTravel (UCT), in partnership with Pilot Flying J, addresses one of the trucking industry's biggest challenges of offering easily accessible and affordable healthcare services for truck drivers. Located at Pilot Flying J Travel Centers, UCT clinics offer Occupational Medical services (DOT/non-DOT physicals, workers comp, sleep apnea screening, urine/hair drug screens, etc.) and Primary/Urgent Care services (chronic disease screening and management (e.g. diabetes, cholesterol, hypertension), blood pressure checks, Men's & Women's wellness exams, wound care, cold/cough/flu, upper respiratory infections, sinus infections, ear infections, muscle pain/strain, etc.).

UrgentCareTravel's affordable **GOLD Healthcare Membership program** includes unlimited FREE visits (in-clinic services) at UrgentCareTravel locations. With health insurance plans costing more, providing less medical coverage and requiring higher deductible payments, UrgentCareTravel's **GOLD Healthcare Membership program** is a cost-effective option to address the healthcare needs of drivers, local businesses and communities.

