



Mid Back, Rib & Chest Pain

SYMPTOMS: If you are experiencing pain in the chest and/or mid-back when taking deep breaths in, there may be a mis-alignment of the vertebrae in the back. Pain may be dull or sharp depending on the severity of the sprain. Pain may be mostly achy, but occasionally sharp in the mid back and chest region. Pain may radiate from the breastbone to the side of the rib cage. Pain may radiate bilaterally in the mid-back. Other symptoms may be present. Oftentimes, misalignments of the mid back vertebrae and ribs mimic symptoms of a heart attack, especially when pain is felt on the left side of the chest region.

CAUSES: People are often surprised to learn that ribs can go out of alignment similar to the vertebrae in your spine. Ribs attach to the breast bone in the front of the body, and the spine in the back of the body. Any location in the body where two bones touch together is an actual joint. Most joints in the body are treatable by a chiropractor. Ribs and mid-back vertebrae often go out of position from over-exertion. Oftentimes, they are more prevalent at a change in season, such as spring, when people engage in prolonged gardening, or winter when people begin shoveling snow extensively. People often "pill pop" with aspirin or ibuprofen for mid back pain. Unfortunately, drugs only cover up the symptoms without addressing the underlying cause, joint dysfunction in the vertebrae of the mid back. Back pain is not caused by a lack of aspirin. In fact, taking medication to ease the pain can actually make the problem worse. Your body is sending you pain signals as a reminder not to move a certain way. If you ignore that mechanism by covering up the pain with medication, you risk further injury & damage. Other common causes of mid back pain are poor posture, computer work at an improperly set up work-station, sports injuries, low back mis-alignment, just to name a few.

TREATMENT: Your doctor of chiropractic will take a thorough history and perform a physical exam. Conservative treatment using spinal manipulation, massage, electrical stimulation as well as hot and cold packs. Home care may be recommended such as stretching, avoiding certain activities, and in some cases, a rib brace may be prescribed.