



*Better
Together*

Patient information

Tietze Syndrome (Or Chest Wall Pain)

Breast Services Directorate

What is Tietze Syndrome (chest wall pain)?

It may seem strange, but some women think they have a pain in the breast, however when examined by a doctor or nurse, the pain is not actually in the breast itself. The pain is in the rib cage.

Tietze's syndrome is inflammation of the cartilage (tough, flexible tissue) that joins your ribs to your breastbone (sternum).

How does the doctor know I have Tietze Syndrome?

The doctor or nurse has carefully examined you and found the area of the pain on your chest. This area can be where your ribs join onto the breastbone by some cartilage.

The pain may feel like an ache, a throb, a soreness or a drawing sensation. It will not vary with your monthly cycle if you still have periods. It is not a serious problem; it is like having arthritis in these joints.

What treatment can I have?

Many women feel that they do not need any treatment, once they know what the problem is. Some women may feel that they need some treatment, and simple painkillers may help to take the pain away.

What pain killers should I take?

Simple painkillers like Paracetamol can help. Pain killers like those used to treat arthritis are also usually effective such as: Ibuprofen, Naproxen, or Diclofenac.

Alternatively, instead of tablets, you may like to try the pain killer as a pain relieving gel which you apply to the skin over the tender areas of your chest. Please ask your doctor if this is suitable for you.

However, some people cannot take these types of painkillers, especially those people who have asthma or are prone to peptic (gastric, or duodenal) ulcers and those taking some regular medication such as anti-coagulants (i.e. Warfarin).

If you take any other medication or have other health problems, or if you have any doubts about your choice of painkiller, please talk to your doctor who could recommend an alternative.

What if the simple painkillers do not work?

If the pain continues after trying simple painkillers; it is possible for your hospital doctor to try an injection of local anaesthetic with a steroid at the area of the pain.

It is rare for women to need such a treatment, but your doctor may discuss this with you

Further information

Breast Nurse Practitioners

Tel: 0151 706 2931

Text phone number: 18001 0151 706 2931

Breast Care Nurses

Tel: 0151 706 2927

Text phone number: 18001 0151 706 2927

Your family doctor (GP) or Practice Nurse

Breast Cancer Care

Tel: 0808 800 6000

www.breastcancercare.org.uk

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All Trust approved information is available on request in alternative formats, including other languages, easy read, large print, audio, Braille, moon and electronically.

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