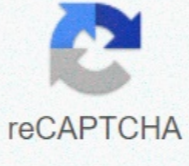




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## Shortness of breath and back pain between shoulder blades

OverviewYour back is highly vulnerable to injury because it's responsible for bending, twisting, and lifting. Back pain that lasts longer than three months is considered chronic back pain.Shortness of breath includes any difficulty breathing. You may feel as if you can't catch your breath, are breathing very fast, or have just engaged in intense physical activity. If you can't relate the shortness of breath to anxiety or physical exertion, the symptom may indicate a serious medical condition.Here are 11 possible causes of back pain and shortness of breath.Pneumonia is an infection in one or both lungs. It can be caused by bacteria, viruses, or fungi. Bacterial pneumonia is the most common type in adults. Read more about pneumonia. Obesity is defined as having a BMI of 30 or more. Body mass index is a rough calculation of a person's weight in relation to their height. Read more about the risk of obesity.Coronary artery disease (CAD) is impaired blood flow in the arteries that supply blood to the heart. Read more about the symptoms of CAD.Heart attacks (called myocardial infarctions) are very common in the United States. During a heart attack, the blood supply that normally nourishes the heart with oxygen is cut off and the heart muscle begins to die. Read more about heart attacks.Kyphosis, also known as roundback or hunchback, is a condition in which the spine in the upper back has an excessive curvature. Read more about kyphosis.Scoliosis is an abnormal curvature of the spine. If your spine is curved from side to side or in an "S" or "C" shape, you might have scoliosis. Read more about scoliosis.Lung cancer is cancer that starts in the lungs. Early symptoms mimic a cold or other common conditions, so most people don't seek medical attention right away. Read more about lung cancer symptoms.The aorta is a large artery that carries blood out of your heart. If you have a dissection of the aorta, it means that blood has entered the wall of the artery that's between the inner and middle layers. Read more about the dissection of the aorta.Multiple myeloma is a type of cancer that affects plasma cells. Plasma cells are a type of white blood cell found in the bone marrow. Read more about multiple myeloma.Paroxysmal nocturnal hemoglobinuria (PNH) is a rare disorder that causes red blood cells to break down sooner than they should. This early destruction can lead to symptoms and complications that range from minimal, such as discoloration of urine, to severe, such as leukemia and stroke. Read more about PNH.Polio (also known as poliomyelitis) is a highly contagious disease caused by a virus that attacks the nervous system. Children younger than 5 years old are more likely to contract the virus than any other group. Read more about polio.Seek immediate medical attention if you suspect your back pain and shortness of breath are related to a heart attack. The primary symptoms of heart attack are:chest pain with associated pain in the neck or arms (particularly the left arm) nausea/dizziness unexplained sweating While heart attacks may have the classic symptoms of crushing chest pain, they can also have less severe symptoms, including back pain and shortness of breath. This is especially true for women. When in doubt, seek immediate medical attention to rule out a possible cardiac event.Make an appointment with your doctor if your symptoms don't improve with rest.Because shortness of breath can cause loss of consciousness and anxiety, your doctor will likely address this symptom first. Immediate treatment may include medications that reduce airway spasms or inflammation. If a heart-related condition is causing your shortness of breath, your physician may prescribe diuretics. These reduce the amount of fluid in your body. They might also prescribe heart medications. You may need to have oxygen temporarily delivered through a thin plastic tube in your nose or through a face mask.If your back pain is due to injury, a physician will evaluate the seriousness of your injury. Most back pain goes away with rest, physical therapy, and other home care measures. However, your doctor may recommend surgery if you are found to have certain conditions, such as a fracture, a ruptured disc, or a pinched nerve.Special back bracing may be used to treat some fractures and cases of scoliosis.Resting your back for one to two days and following your doctor's recommendations can help your back pain improve. While you'll want to rest your back, doing so for more than two days can lead to stiffness, which can work against the healing process.Taking an over-the-counter pain reliever such as ibuprofen can help reduce pain.If you've undergone surgery related to your symptoms, follow your doctor's instructions regarding at-home care.You may be able to prevent back pain and shortness of breath by doing the following:Maintain a healthy weight and lifestyle, which includes eating a healthy diet and exercising regularly. If you're overweight and have difficulty exercising, increase exercise in smaller increments to build stamina and promote lung health.Refrain from smoking or take steps to quit if you currently smoke. Shoulder blade pain is a very common experience, with causes ranging from simple strains to serious conditions, such as heart attacks or liver problems.Determining the cause of shoulder blade pain can be difficult. People experiencing shoulder blade pain need to know the possible reasons for the pain and what precautions to take.In this article, we examine a variety of different causes of pain around the shoulder blades, along with what can be done to treat each problem.There can be various reasons for pain in the shoulder blades.The shoulder blades are the triangular bones on the back of the shoulders, medically known as the scapulae.Each shoulder blade connects the upper arm bone to the collarbone and has three groups of muscles attached to it. These muscles help move the shoulder joint.The shoulder has a wide range of motion. The muscles that connect the shoulder blade allow the shoulder to rotate, move in a circle, move up and down, and side to side.As the shoulder can move in so many ways, it is easy to injure, which can cause shoulder blade pain.Unfortunately, shoulder blade pain is not often as simple as injury-related pain. In some cases, shoulder blade pain is caused by pain from a nearby organ in distress. There are many potential causes of shoulder blade pain. In some cases, a person may be able to figure out what is causing their pain.A few examples of causes that may be obvious to a person include:trauma from a hit, fall, or accidentssleeping in an uncomfortable or odd positionstrain from lifting a heavy objectSometimes, however, the cause of the pain may be more difficult to determine.Some conditions can cause what is called referred pain, which occurs in the shoulder blades but is due to a problem in another part of the body.Some potential causes of referred pain in the shoulder blades include:Some causes are more likely to cause pain in one shoulder over the other. For example, a heart attack is more likely to cause pain in the left shoulder blade. Gallbladder disease is more likely to cause pain in the right shoulder blade.By contrast, a strain may occur in either shoulder blade depending on where the injury occurred.Causes may fit into several categories. Some of the causes are listed below:Bone and joint issuesThere are several potential bone or joint problems that can cause shoulder blade pain.As the shoulder blade is a bone, it is possible for a person to experience a fracture. This is an unlikely occurrence in most cases, as it requires a fall, an accident, or a similar direct injury to the shoulder blade.As a person ages, degenerative conditions may cause shoulder blade pain. Some of these conditions include:arthritisosteoporosis scoliosis spinal stenosis fibromyalgia frozen shoulder More specifically, a type of arthritis called ankylosing spondylitis is most common among people aged 20-40. It is a form of arthritis that primarily affects the spine, but it can cause pain and inflammation to surrounding areas.Certain cancers may also cause pain in the shoulders and shoulder blades. The most common cancers that may cause shoulder blade pain include lung cancer, breast cancer, and colon cancer.Musculoskeletal causesIt is very common for a person to experience a musculoskeletal issue that causes shoulder blade pain. Overuse, strains, sleeping awkwardly, and rotator cuff issues all fall into this category.These problems are often related to pain in the muscle groups surrounding the shoulders, including some of the arm muscles.Cardiac causesOne of the more serious causes of shoulder blade pain is heart-related problems. Healthcare professionals note that localized pain in the left shoulder may be a sign of a heart attack, particularly in women.Women experiencing pain in the shoulder blade that cannot be explained by a musculoskeletal problem should seek immediate medical attention.Other heart conditions that may cause shoulder blade pain include:a tear in the aortainflammation of the lining of the heartPulmonary causesCertain lung conditions may also cause referred pain in the shoulder blades. Some examples of lung conditions include:cancer that grows on the top part of the lungsclots that travel from the legs to the lungscollapsed lungAbdominal causesThere are some conditions that occur in the abdomen that may cause shoulder blade pain. Issues with the abdomen area that may cause shoulder blade pain include:surgerynerve painpeptic ulcer diseasepancreatitisliver diseaseStretching may help to ease shoulder blade pain.Isolated pain in the right or left side of the neck is most commonly the result of muscle strain or injury.The following activities could contribute to pain in one side of the neck:Bad posture. Poor posture can strain the muscles in and around the neck and may also lead to an uneven spreading of weight, which could cause pain on one particular side.Poor sleeping position. Sleeping in an awkward position can cause neck pain, and this is more likely for people who sleep on their stomach. Using too many pillows or an unsupportive mattress can also lead to problems.Whiplash. Pain from neck sprains are the result of ligament or muscle damage. While whiplash is most commonly associated with being in a vehicle accident, other common causes include doing vigorous sporting activity and riding a rollercoaster.A doctor will need to examine a person to work out what is causing the shoulder blade pain. Normal diagnosis starts with an interview in which the doctor will try to work out if there is any simple reason for the pain.Once the doctor has ruled out simple causes, they may perform some different assessments.These tests may include:heart tests, such as an electrocardiogram (EKG or ECG) or stress testabdominal tests, such as endoscopyblood work that tests for liver functionradiological studies of the chest and back using an MRI or CAT scanTreatment depends largely on the exact cause of the pain.For simple cases of overuse, strain, or sleeping poorly, a person may be able to try a range of treatments from home. These may include:resticepain relief medications such as ibuprofenmedicated rubs and ointmentsstretchingmassagesWhere there is an underlying disorder, treatment relies on treating the underlying cause. For example, cancer may require radiation, chemotherapy, or other therapies. Heart conditions may need medications that target heart problems.When a person knows the cause of the shoulder blade pain, treatment is likely to be more effective.If treatment is not working, however, people must talk to their doctor to see whether their treatment needs changing or adjusting.Immediate medical attention should be sought for unexplained pain in the left shoulder blade accompanied by shortness of breath or chest pain.In many cases, a person can trace shoulder blade pain back to a seemingly harmless incident, such as a recent fall or an occasion when they lifted too much weight.It may be less evident to a person who slept badly, but warning signs include sleeping on one side for too long or having recently switched mattresses.People who are unable to explain a pain in their shoulder blade should see their doctor.Women should be particularly wary of any pain in the left shoulder blade as it could be a sign of a heart attack, and they should seek out immediate attention from a doctor.A person may also wish to see a doctor in the case of a strain as the doctor may be able to recommend additional treatment.Symptoms that signal a need for immediate attention include:chest painshortness of breathrapid or irregular heartbeatsudden difficulty speakinglightheadednesspain, swelling, or redness in the legscoughing up bloodfever/vision problemsparalysis on one side of the bodyexcessive sweatingloss of consciousnessPreventable shoulder blade pain is typically associated with trauma and overuse. Steps to take may include:avoiding potential falling riskswearing a seatbelt in a carcreasing into any new workout routinechanging sleeping positionsOther means of prevention include:eating a balanced diet that is rich in nutrientsgetting moderate exercisestretchingFor simple causes, it is very likely a person will experience a full recovery with minimal medical intervention. In most of these situations, it will probably only take a few days to a few weeks for a person to experience complete symptom relief.Where the pain is due to an underlying cause, the length of treatment and recovery time will vary greatly.It is important to know the cause so that an effective treatment plan can be created to address the underlying issues.Read the article in Spanish.

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