

# Costovertebral Joint Sprain

## ***Costovertebral Joint Sprain***

**Situation:** *Costovertebral Joint Sprain* occurs when there is damage to the joints connecting your ribs to the vertebrae of your upper—or *thoracic*—spine. Along with the facet joints, the costovertebral joints are designed to support your body weight and allow movement like bending, twisting, lifting, and arching. Each costovertebral joint is made up of smooth cartilage which lies between the bony surfaces, cushioning the impact of one bone—your rib—on another—your vertebrae. Strong connective tissue also wraps around the bony ends, providing support to the joint. When excessive stretching or compressive forces are placed on the costovertebral joints, damage to the cartilage, misalignment of the rib head or tearing of the connective tissue surrounding the joint can occur. This injury is known as a costovertebral joint sprain.

**Causes:** Costovertebral joint sprains typically occur during excessive bending, lifting, arching, or twisting movements, although they are sometimes also caused by trauma—like sports injuries or car accidents—or repetitive movements. **Symptoms:** Symptoms can include sudden pain in the upper back and rib while actively bending, twisting, lifting, and arching. Sometimes, however, pain and stiffness occur after the activity, often the next morning. Symptoms are generally felt on one side of the spine and rib cage, frequently with accompanying muscle spasms around the injured joint.

**Treatment:** Treatment options can include chiropractic care, acupuncture, physical therapy, and massage therapy. The chiropractor will help determine what type of treatments and modalities are appropriate for you.