

Rib pain

Rib pain may either be due to a problem with the ribs themselves or be referred from the spine or organs within the chest.

Local problems in the rib or rib cartilage include fractures, inflammation (costochondritis) or rarely infiltration with tumour – normally a secondary deposit from a known tumour elsewhere.

Referred pain can come from nerve compression in the spine due to spinal collapse, deformity or degenerative change.

Assessment

Following a full history and examination investigation may be indicated. MRI scanning is useful in ruling out serious pathology and also shows the state of the discs and facet joints in detail together with any evidence of neurological compression.

Further assessment may involve a bone scan, plain radiographs and blood tests.

Treatment

This of course depends on the diagnosis, any associations, the impact it has on the patients life and what has been tried already. More information can be obtained on the treatment page help sheets