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What is Sternoclavicular Joint Sprain?

The sternoclavicular joint is located between the clavicle (collarbone) and the manubrium of the sternum (breastbone). It is often injured during falls, sports injuries, and car accidents. These events could lead to a sprain injury that varies from mild damage to a complete rupture of the ligaments of the sternoclavicular joint (see images above).

What are the symptoms?

- Chest pain at the base of the neck near the end of the collarbone (varying in intensity depending on the severity of the injury).
- Pain on elevating the arm above the head.
- Pain when sleeping on the involved side.
- Pain with neck movements.

How is it treated?

In mild injury, treatment may include the application of ice, rest, use of an arm sling, massage, rehabilitation exercises, and the use of electrotherapeutic modalities. Medication may be required for pain and inflammation. In more severe cases, surgery may be necessary.

What can I do?

- Follow the advice given to you by your practitioner and avoid any aggravating activities.
- Apply ice over the affected region for about 10 minutes several times a day. Ice can be applied as often as every hour.
- If any exercises are prescribed, perform them daily within your pain tolerance. Stop the exercises if they worsen your symptoms and inform your practitioner so that your exercise plan can be modified.

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