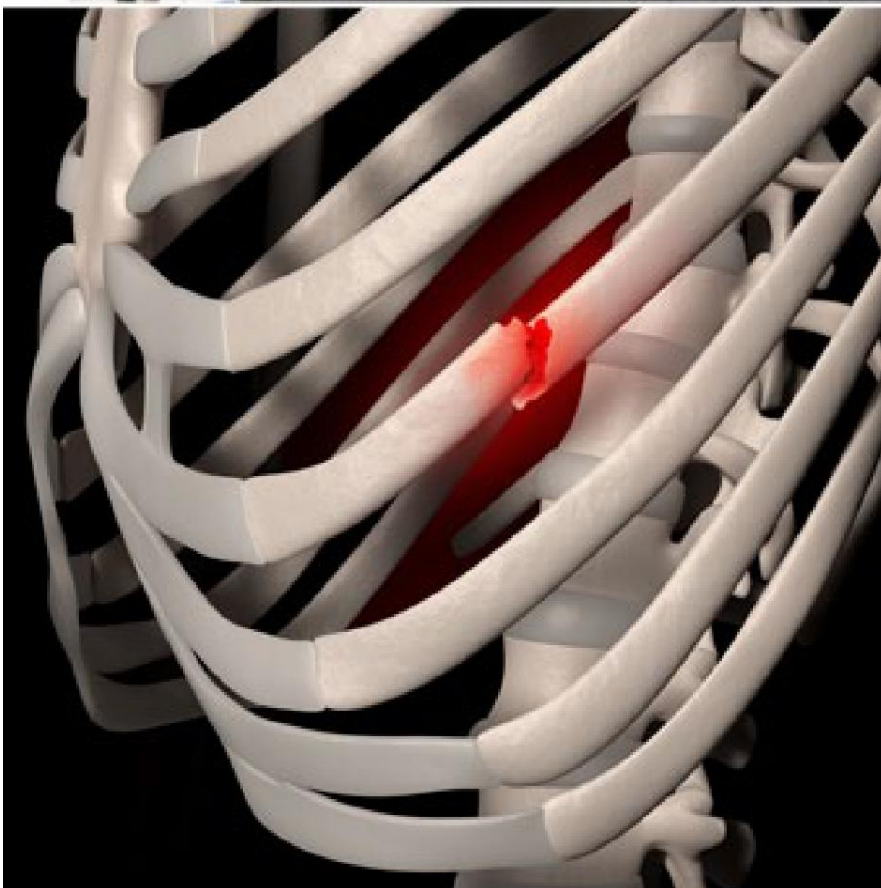




Rib Fracture



Overview

This is a break of one of the thin, curved bones that protects your chest cavity. Your ribs connect to each other with layers of muscles. They attach to your spine. With a minor fracture, your rib may only be cracked. With a severe fracture, you may have a complete break. Your rib may shift out of place.

Causes

A rib fracture can be caused by a hard impact to your chest. It can happen during contact sports. It can happen if you have a road accident, or if you have a fall. You may also break a rib by coughing hard. This most often happens to people with weak bones. Osteoporosis raises your risk for this type of break. Cancer also weakens bones.

Symptoms

A rib fracture causes pain, especially when you breathe, or when you bend or twist your body. Pressing on the injury site or your breastbone may also be painful. You may have shortness of breath, and you may have a headache. You may feel anxious, restless, dizzy or tired.

Treatment

Treatment depends on your injury. In most cases, a broken rib will heal on its own. You may need to restrict your activities while it heals. You may need medications to help with pain. Your doctor will create a plan that's right for you.