

Dr. Lisa McMahon discusses Slipping Rib Syndrome
Aired March 4, 2021
Transcript

0:00
hi i'm dr lisa mcMahon and i'm the
0:02
co-director of the phoenix children's
0:04
chest wall program
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i'm here to talk to you today about
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slipping rib syndrome so what is
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slipping rib syndrome
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well it's a condition in which the lower
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costal cartilages or ribs
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don't connect to each other allowing
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those ribs to slide against each other
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and impinge upon that intercostal nerve
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that runs on the back side of each of
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our ribs
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this is a diagram showing that that
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shows the rib here the bony rib here
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and the cartilage here they aren't
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connected to each other usually it's
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eight to ten
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they generally connect to each other and
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then connect to seven which goes to the
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sternum but when they don't connect
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sometimes they can be malformed and
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they're more likely to encroach upon
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each other like this
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this can cause symptoms of pain mainly
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so sometimes people will hear a clicking
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sound
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or a sliding sound or a weird feeling
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inside of their body of something kind
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of
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snapping and then that's oftentimes
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associated with pain
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either immediately or a little bit later
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oftentimes the pain is sharp and
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stabbing
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and just directly in the area where the
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ribs
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slide against each other and other times
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it's a kind of more dull achy pain
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and the pain can travel towards the back
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too but generally it's mainly localized
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in the front
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this is can sometimes be a difficult
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diagnosis to make
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the key is to know that it exists to be
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able to look for it

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but one of the easy ways to find out if
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you have it or not is just to feel along
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your lower costal cartilage
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and if you feel things move and
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especially if it's associated with pain
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then likely these cartilages aren't
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attached now just because the cartilages
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aren't attached doesn't necessarily
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mean you have a slipping rib syndrome it
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just means you have a slipping rib
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only if there's pain do we really call
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it the syndrome
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at this hospital we've also developed a
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protocol to look and diagnose this with
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ultrasound and so the ultrasound uses
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radio waves to see these ribs and then
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they do some maneuvers so
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you do a sit-up or push on the lower
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costal cartilage and you can see these
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move against each other thus diagnosing
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the condition
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to treat slipping rib syndrome the first
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thing we want to do is conservative
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management
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so rest stopping the activity that
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causes the pain
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using ice sometimes if you have pain as
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well as nsaid's like ibuprofen
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can really decrease the inflammation and
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make it feel better
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however for some people it's quite
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debilitating pain and they're not able
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to do their regular activities or the
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things that they love to do
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and in that case the option is surgery
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the traditional operation is to remove
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these costal cartilages because then
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they removes the
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mechanical reason for you to have the
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pain if there's no more cartilage to
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impinge upon the nerve above then
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ideally the pain would go away now
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sometimes these ribs the bony ribs
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themselves
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are quite flexible as well and
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traditionally
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these have been partially excised in
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some cases also
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however this does seem to add some

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protection to your abdominal wall
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and your chest and therefore i it's not
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something that i like to remove
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these cartilages aren't actually helping
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too much in terms of your structure if
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they're not connected to each other and
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they're moving around
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so i developed a technique in which i
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place a vertical plate along these ribs
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should they try to move against each
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other in the operating room
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that's really decreased the rate of
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recurrence for this
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or the rate of recurring slipping ribs
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for this procedure significantly
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usually it's an overnight stay in the
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hospital at our institution
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and people tend to recover fairly well
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especially after physical therapy
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please give us a call if you have any
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questions about slipping rib syndrome
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we would be very happy to answer any of
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your questions or see you in
3:53
consultation
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thank you

English (auto-generated)