

## CHEST PAIN

The chest is commonly defined as those structures that make up the anterior thorax above the level of the most distal point of the xiphoid bone. Bony structures include the clavicles, ribs, associated cartilage, sternum, and xiphoid process. Internal soft structures include the heart, major blood vessels, lungs, bronchial tree, diaphragm, segments of the liver, the esophagus and trachea (those segments not in the throat), and the various nerves and blood vessels that serve them all. The external soft structures include the breasts, the superficial nerves and blood vessels.

*Chest pain* can arise from the chest wall or from within the chest or abdomen. Its sources may include boils, abscesses, herpes zoster infection (*shingles*), pain in the female breast, Bornholm disease, neuralgia, injury or fracture of ribs, cervical dorsal outlet syndrome, or any disease that can put pressure on the nerves innervating the chest wall (cysts, tumors, or aneurysm of the aorta). Various trigger point formations housed in muscles or other structures on the chest wall and in the neck and shoulder can also refer pain to the chest area. *Chest pain* can result from strain or extrafusal muscle spasm of the intercostal musculature or other musculature on the chest wall. Pain arising from within the chest or abdomen may be derived from pleurisy, emphysema, pneumothorax, pneumonia, pulmonary embolism, aneurysm of the aorta, ischemic heart disease, pericarditis, obstruction of the esophagus, achalasia of the cardia, abscess in the liver or under the diaphragm, hernias of the diaphragm, diseases of the gallbladder, and ulcers of the stomach (peptic or cancerous). Fever and general feelings of malaise will usually accompany infection and septic conditions of the chest, such as pneumonia, cholecystitis or abscess of the liver.

### **Treatment**

Relieve any inflammation (as determined by DSR survey), adhesion formations, or trigger points that evaluation may determine to be present.

### **Trigger Points**

The following trigger point formations may, singly or in combination, refer pain into the area of the chest: Scalenus, Serratus posterior superior, Serratus anterior, Subclavius, Pectoralis major, Pectoralis major (clavicular fibers), Pectoralis major (parasternal fibers), Pectoralis major (sternal portion), Pectoralis minor, Sternalis, Iliocostalis thoracis (T6), External oblique [A], and External oblique [B].