

PECTUS CARINATUM “PIGEON CHEST”

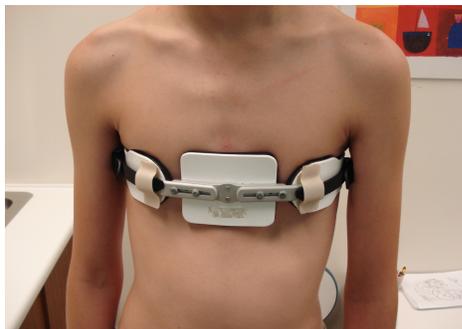
Pectus Carinatum or “pigeon chest” is an elevation of the sternum (breast bone). The elevation may be equal on both sides or higher on one side. The deformity usually appears in childhood and can increase with age. The Pectus Carinatum defect does not cause any significant “physical” symptoms and therefore the indication to treat the defect is for altered body image. For example, these individuals will often avoid removing their shirts in a public situation due to the fear of being ridiculed by others.



Pectus Carinatum

Most patients with a Pectus Carinatum do not require surgery. Many cases respond to dynamic compression therapy. Dynamic compression therapy involves wearing a brace, which over time molds the cartilages and sternum into a more normal position. Some patients recommend wearing an Under Armour shirt or cotton t-shirt beneath the brace if the brace is not worn directly on the skin.

Brace





As shown above the brace, if worn properly, leaves a pressure mark which goes away after several minutes.

We reserve surgical correction for those patients with significant Pectus Carinatum deformities that fail dynamic compression therapy. Surgical correction, if required, is best done between the ages of 14 to 17 years. Surgery for Pectus Carinatum involves an incision over the lower aspect of the defect and removal of the abnormal cartilages. The sternum (breastbone) is then placed in a normal position. The procedure is done under general anesthesia and an epidural catheter is placed for the management of pain after the operation. Most patients remain in hospital for 4 to 5 days after the procedure. After discharge home there is initially some limitation of physical activities for approximately 3 months.

If you have any questions or concerns after reviewing the material you have received please feel free to arrange a follow-up appointment to see Dr. Fitzgerald or Dr Walton if you have not already done so.

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