**Pain Between Your Shoulders?**

**Houston Area Chiropractor Comments:** Patients come into the office complaining of burning pain in their upper back or stabbing pain between their shoulders. Pain in the upper and/or mid back is less common than lower back or neck pain. The upper back is the area between the cervical spine (neck) and the low back (lumbar spine). The upper back is called the thoracic spine, and it is the most stable part of the spine. The range of motion in the upper back is limited because of the spine’s attachments to the ribs (rib cage). This stability plays an important role in holding the body upright and providing protection for the vital organs in the chest.

The primary causes of thoracic pain are muscular problems, joint dysfunction, herniated or degenerative discs, arthritis, vertebral fractures, kyphosis (hunchback) or scoliosis. Muscular problems are the most common and are typically related to poor posture or being in the same posture for prolonged periods of time (ie. on a computer or having large breasts). Joint dysfunction is typically related to spinal subluxations or irritation where the ribs attach to the spine. Degenerated or herniated discs in the thoracic spine are not as common as the cervical or lumbar spine, but can cause pain also. Arthritic changes increase as the person ages. The arthritis can cause aggravation of the joints or irritation of the nerves. Vertebral fractures can either come from compression fractures in people with osteoporosis or from accidents or injuries. Kyphosis (hunchback) can be due to Scheuermann's kyphosis, ankylosing spondylitis (AS) or simply poor posture. Scoliosis is a sideways curvature of the spine.

Thoracic pain can also be due to secondary causes. Some of the secondary causes of mid back pain are bone cancer, shingles, stomach ulcers, problems affecting the lung (including a Pancoast tumor), stomach, liver, gallbladder and pancreas problems can all cause referred pain in the thoracic spine area.

The key to getting pain free is a proper history and exam so that the correct diagnosis is made. Here at Beecher Chiropractic we have seen hundreds of cases of mid back pain over the last 26 years. We will be able to determine if you simply need to modify your workstation, do you need chiropractic care and/or rehabilitative exercises or do you need to be referred to another provider. Your health is our primary concern.

Dr. Ward Beecher practices at Beecher Chiropractic Clinic at 1001 Pineloch, Ste 700 Houston, TX 77062. You can schedule an appointment at [www.BeecherChiropractic.com](http://www.BeecherChiropractic.com) or by calling (281) 286-1300. If you have any questions regarding this blog, please comment below!