

# Unexplained Severe Pain?

# THINK AORTA

Aortic Dissection is an emergency  
that is often fatal when missed

## CT Scan for definitive diagnosis

### Symptoms:

- Chest pain is the #1 symptom
- Can also present with pain in the neck, back or abdomen
- Numbness or weakness in any limbs
- Syncope

### Pain can be:

- Sharp, tearing, ripping
- Sudden onset
- Migratory and transient

### Risk Factors:

- Hypertension
- Aortic aneurysm
- Bicuspid aortic valve
- Presence of mutation in a known gene that triggers aortic dissection
- Marfan, Loeys-Dietz and other related syndromes
- Family history of aortic dissection, aneurysms or unexplained sudden death

### Physical Examination:

- Pulse deficit or evidence of reduced blood flow in the extremities
- Blood pressure differences in the limbs
- Neurological signs of stroke or paraplegia
- New heart murmur, aortic insufficiency or pericardial effusion

### Diagnostic Warning:

- Chest x-ray, EKG, ultrasound and blood tests can be normal

[www.thinkaorta.us](http://www.thinkaorta.us)



The Society  
of Thoracic  
Surgeons

