

# Unexplained Severe Pain?

# THINK AORTA

Aortic Dissection is an emergency  
that is often fatal when missed

## CT Scan for a definitive diagnosis

### Symptoms

- Pain is the #1 symptom
- Neck, back, chest or abdomen
- Numbness or weakness in any limbs
- History of collapse

#### Pain characteristics can be:

- Maximal in seconds
- Migratory & transient
- Pain can be sharp, tearing, ripping

### Patient Risk Factors

- Hypertension
- Aortic aneurysm
- Bicuspid aortic valve
- Familial aortic disease
- Marfans and other connective tissue disorders

### Physical Examination

- Pulse deficit or vascular signs
- Neurological signs of stroke or paraplegia

### Diagnostic Warning

- Chest x-ray, ECG, ultrasound & blood tests can be normal

Aortic Dissection Awareness UK in collaboration with:

Heart Research UK  
Society for Cardiothoracic Surgery in Great Britain and Ireland  
The Royal College of Emergency Medicine

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

