

MEDICAL MYSTERY

CAN YOU SOLVE THE CASE?

Review the history, examine the images, and choose the best answer.

Answers: p120

CASE 1

PA WRIST RADIOGRAPH



A 24-year-old right-hand-dominant male presents to the urgent care clinic after falling onto his outstretched hand while skateboarding one hour ago. He reports sharp pain on the radial side of his left wrist. He denies any numbness or tingling in his fingers.

PHYSICAL EXAM

Vitals: Within normal limits.

Musculoskeletal: No gross deformity or swelling of the wrist. Range of motion is slightly limited by pain, particularly during wrist extension and radial deviation. Point tenderness is elicited upon palpation of the “anatomic snuffbox” and with axial loading of the first metacarpal.

Neurovascular: Radial pulse is 2+; sensation is intact in the median, radial, and ulnar nerve distributions. Capillary refill is less than 2 seconds.

WHAT IS THE BEST NEXT STEP?

- A. Reassurance and return to activity as tolerated
- B. Application of a thumb spica splint and repeat imaging in 2 weeks
- C. Referral to orthopedics with an MRI
- D. Corticosteroid injection
- E. Open reduction and internal fixation

CASE 2

PA CHEST



A 68-year old female with a history of COPD and tobacco use (50-pack-years) undergoes an elective open cholecystectomy. The procedure is performed under general anesthesia and lasts three hours. On postoperative day 2, the patient is normothermic at 37.4 °C (99.4 °F) but develops mild tachypnea. She complains of vague chest discomfort and severe shortness of breath that has worsened since onset. Discomfort and severe shortness of breath that has worsened

LATERAL CHEST



PHYSICAL EXAM

Vitals: Heart rate 92 bpm, Respiration 27/min, SpO₂ 86% on room air.

Lungs: decreased breath sounds and dullness to percussion are noted at the left lung base.

Cardiovascular: Regular rate of rhythm; no murmurs, rubs, or gallops.

WHAT IS THE MOST LIKELY DIAGNOSIS?

- A. Left lower lobe collapse
- B. COPD exacerbation
- C. Bacterial pneumonia
- D. Pulmonary embolism
- E. Pericardial effusion