

Mediastinum

Anatomy

Widened if >8cm or >25% AP diameter on erect PA chest x-ray.

Anterior;

Sternum anteriorly, pericardium and brachiocephalic vessels posteriorly. Contains thymus gland, anterior mediastinal lymph nodes, internal mammary arteries and veins.

Middle;

Between anterior and posterior mediastina. Contains heart, ascending and transverse arch of aorta, venae cava, brachiocephalic arteries and veins, phrenic nerves, trachea, main bronchi and lymph nodes, and pulmonary arteries and veins.

Posterior;

From pericardium and trachea anteriorly and vertebral column posteriorly. Contains descending thoracic aorta, oesophagus, thoracic duct, azygos and hemiazygos veins and posterior group of mediastinal lymph nodes.

Masses

Anterior;

Thymomas, lymphomas, teratomatous neoplasms, thyroid masses

Middle;

Vascular masses, lymph node enlargement from mediastitis or granulomatous disease, pleuropericardial and bronchogenic cysts

Posterior;

Neurogenic tumours, meningoceles, meningomyeloceles, gastroenteric cysts and oesophageal diverticula/achalasia