

Collar bone (clavicle) fracture: Non-operative management

Your child has sustained a fracture to the collar bone (clavicle). This fracture usually heals well in a simple sling. The sling will help keep your child comfortable while the bone heals.



It is often easiest to place the sling under loose clothing.

The first 24-48 hours after injury

Your child will have pain in the shoulder initially. Medication such as Ibuprofen and/or Paracetamol as needed (as long as not allergic) following the directions on the package will help decrease the pain.

Although nerve and artery injuries are very rare with this injury, you should return to the Emergency Department if your child develops numbness or tingling in the hand.

Follow-up appointment

Most children with collar bone (clavicle) fractures do not require follow-up with the Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon, or need to get another x-ray.

Some children over the age of 10 with displaced fractures, may need a review by the Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon in the Fracture Clinic about 7-

10 days after injury. You will be notified with regard to this, by the Trauma Assessment Clinic Physiotherapist.

After 3 weeks

Remove the sling 3 weeks after your child broke the collar bone (clavicle). With the sling off, your child can begin moving the shoulder. At first, the shoulder may be stiff. The movement will get better with time but this may take up to 6 months. Physiotherapy is not usually necessary.

To decrease the risk of re-breaking the collar bone (clavicle), your child should not participate in high-risk activities such as playing on monkey-bars, trampoline, rugby or other contact sports for 12 weeks after the injury. However, your child can return to low-risk activities such as swimming as soon as the shoulder is comfortable.

Your child may feel a bump on the collar bone (clavicle). This is normal, it means that the fracture has healed. The bump will get smaller over the next year, but it may not disappear completely if your child is older than 10 years.

Contact your GP if your child continues to have pain in the shoulder 6 weeks after the injury.

Contact your GP if your child has not regained normal shoulder movement 6 months after the injury.

Key Points

- Your child needs a sling to help heal the broken bone.
- You will take off the sling at home after 3 weeks after the injury.
- Your child will need to avoid high-risk activities for a total of 12 weeks after the injury.
- Your child may have a bump on the collar bone where the fracture has healed.
- If your child continues to have pain in the shoulder 6 weeks after the injury, contact your GP.
- If your child has not regained normal shoulder movement 6 months after the injury, contact your GP.