

Clavicle (collar bone) fracture in children

Virtual Fracture Clinic

Information for parents, carers and children



Who is this leaflet for?

Your child has sustained a fracture to the clavicle (collar bone). Children's bones bend more than adults and this type of break is also known as a greenstick fracture. Your child's case has been reviewed by an orthopaedic consultant (bone specialist) and fracture care nurse / physiotherapist in our Virtual Fracture clinic.

What is the Virtual Fracture clinic?

The Virtual Fracture clinic is where an orthopaedic surgeon and a trained nurse or physiotherapist review your child's notes and X-rays without him/her being present. After this has happened, you will receive a letter confirming that the consultant is happy with the treatment plan. Additional advice will be given where relevant.



How long will the fracture take to heal?

A clavicle fracture usually takes around 4 – 6 weeks to heal. Younger children are likely to recover faster as fractures heal more quickly in this age group. The sling is for comfort and can be discarded as soon as comfort allows.

As the bone heals, you may notice or feel a smooth lump over the collarbone. Try not to be alarmed by this – it is a normal part of healing. This lump will remodel or flatten over time. It needs no treatment.

How do I manage my child's pain?

For a new injury, a cold pack (ice pack or frozen peas wrapped in a damp towel) can provide short term pain relief. Apply this to the sore area for up to 15 minutes, every few hours. The ice must never be in direct contact with the skin.

Give your child their usual painkillers if needed, eg over-the-counter paracetamol or ibuprofen appropriate for their age.

They may find it more comfortable to sleep propped up with pillows. If there is severe pain which does not respond to painkillers, or if the pain persists or gets worse after about three weeks, seek medical attention.

Can my child use their arm?

Your child may use the arm as outlined in the table below.

It is important to keep the shoulder moving to prevent stiffness but not to aggravate it.

Your child's treatment plan

Please follow the plan below:

Weeks since injury	Plan
0-3 weeks	Wear the sling during the day except for exercises and personal hygiene. Take the sling off at night and if pain free remove completely. Start by taking it off for short periods of time. Encourage your child to use the arm as comfort allows. Avoid rough play. Initially movements above shoulder height are likely to be painful.
3-6	Begin normal light activities including movements above shoulder height. Discard the sling. Avoid PE.
6 -8	The injury should be largely healed. Your child can resume normal activity as comfort allows. They should have full shoulder movements. Return to PE.

Will my child need any follow-up?

We do not routinely follow up patients with this type of injury as we expect full recovery. If after six weeks there are ongoing concerns, please contact the Virtual Fracture Clinic for further advice.

Contact us

If you have any questions please contact our hotline: 01872 253170
Calls are monitored Monday to Friday 9am – 4pm.

If you or your child have any disability that needs a different method of support from us, please do not hesitate to contact us on the number above. We will do our best to accommodate your needs.

If you would like this leaflet in large print, braille, audio version or in another language, please contact the General Office on 01872 252690

