

Looking after a child with a fractured clavicle

Information for parents and carers

Your child has been diagnosed with a fractured clavicle. This is a common injury in children that heals very well.

What is it?

A fractured clavicle is a break in the collarbone. This usually happens after a fall onto the shoulder.

Treatment

Your child will be given a broad arm sling to be worn under their clothing. This will support the arm and shoulder reducing unnecessary movement. This injury can be very painful when the shoulder is moved.

You will be shown how to apply the sling so you can put it on after your child has had a bath or a shower or if it becomes loose.

Keeping your child comfortable at home

Pain relief - your child may be sore for the first 3 or 4 days. The recommended dose of your child's usual pain relief e.g. paracetamol (Calpol) and/or ibuprofen can be given following the instructions on the bottle to reduce pain.

Rest - in the first 3 or 4 days it is important to keep your child fairly still (involved in gentle play activities only). This will reduce the movement of the arm and help keep your child comfortable.

Positioning - pain can be a common problem, especially at bedtime, as it is often difficult for your child to get comfortable. To help with this you can position your child in bed so that they are lying back, but not completely flat, with additional pillows around the shoulder area. Older children may benefit from being supported in an armchair.

Broad arm sling - please continue to use this under your child's clothes until they are more comfortable when it can be worn over the clothes.

As the clavicle heals it will be less painful and you may find that your child starts to move their arm more during play.

Other measures - it is important for your child to gently move the elbow, wrist and hand regularly to stop the joints becoming stiff.

Follow up - in young children the clavicle fracture will be healed in 3-4 weeks. In young people it can take 6-8 weeks. During this time you may feel or see a bump over the fractured area. Do not be alarmed by this - this is normal and means healing is taking place. This bump may be present for 6 months or longer after the initial injury. In some cases it never fully disappears.

Please avoid contact sports and rough play for 6 weeks after the time of injury.

Clavicle fractures heal very well in children but if you have any concerns about your child, please phone 0131 312 0007/8 & ask for a review clinic appointment.

