

# Collar Bone Injuries

Advice for parents and carers



leeds children's  
hospital

caring about children

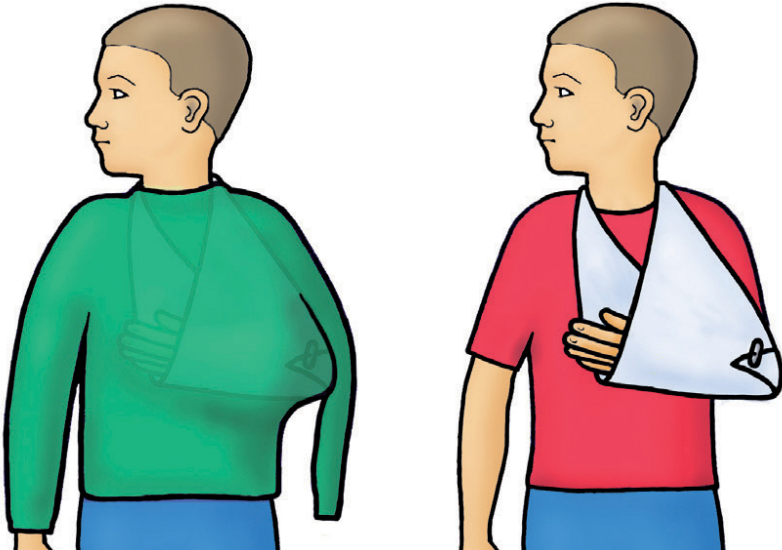
Your child has sustained a collar bone (also known as the clavicle) injury. This bone may also be referred to as being cracked or fractured. In some cases, an x-ray is not necessary as the treatment of a clavicle injury is the same whether it is fractured or not.

### Why does the arm need to be in a sling?

This is to help with healing and to reduce pain.

### How long must the arm be in a sling?

- The sling should be used for a week under clothes followed by a week over clothes, as shown in the below diagram
- Exercise is very important. Your child should be encouraged to move their fingers and hand as soon as they can.



- After 2 weeks, the sling should no longer be necessary and gentle movement of the arm should be encouraged. Once pain allows, your child may be able to take part in non-contact activities such as swimming.
- Your child can go to school but should wear the sling as directed above for the first 2 weeks and should not take part in any contact or rough sporting activities such as PE for 6 weeks after the injury.

### **What happens when your child is sleeping?**

The sling should always be removed when your child is sleeping to avoid the risk of strangulation

### **Can the sling be removed for washing?**

The sling can be removed for washing. If your child leans forward, the arm will naturally move away from the body allowing you to wash under the armpit. It is important to then dry this area thoroughly.

### **What if my child will not keep the sling on all the time?**

Some younger children will not keep their sling on, do not worry. They can use their arm as much as their pain allows and will limit themselves, but they should be stopped from rough play.

### **Will it be painful?**

The injury can be very painful at first but will settle down with time. It is often particularly uncomfortable in bed and sleeping propped up on extra pillows may help. Pain relief like Paracetamol or Ibuprofen could be used to ease the discomfort. Please do ensure you read the instructions for any medication you give your child and do not exceed the maximum dose.

## Will there be any other symptoms to look for?

For the first few days, the skin over the fracture may be bruised and this will settle down on its own over the first week.

A lump may develop over the injury site, which will be tender to start with (because of the bruising and soft tissue swelling). With time, it may be hard and painless (as a healing new bone). This lump may persist for months, but, especially in the younger child, it should eventually get smaller.

99.8 % of these clavicle injuries heal very well by themselves and do not require further follow-up.

## When should I contact a doctor?

- If your child has an extraordinary amount of pain despite regular pain relief
- The skin around the bruising appears to be breaking down
- There is tingling or altered sensation eg. pins and needles in the arm on the affected side
- Your child has difficulty breathing or is short of breath as a result of the injury
- If you have any further concerns

If you have any questions or concerns please phone the **NHS advice line number 111**.



## What did you think of your care?

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