

Clavicle Fracture (collarbone)

BROKEN COLLARBONE
(CLAVICLE FRACTURE)



What is a clavicle fracture?

A clavicle fracture, commonly known as a fractured collarbone is break of a bone in the clavicle, or collarbone.

What causes a clavicle fracture?

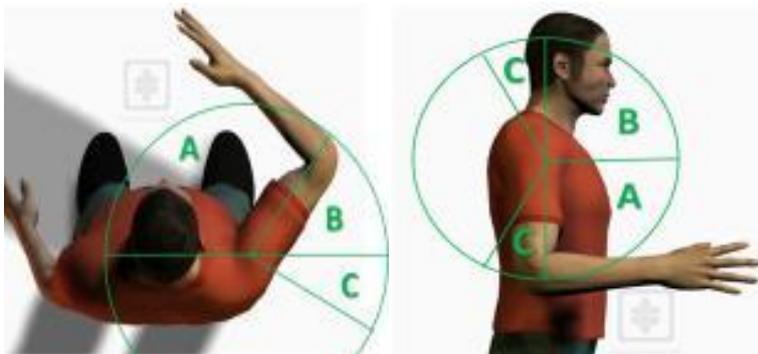
Clavicle fractures are often caused by a fall onto an outstretched upper limb, a fall onto a shoulder or a direct blow to the clavicle.

Sling or surgery

All injuries are initially managed in a sling for pain relief and to allow the injured bone to heal. More severe injuries, particularly in overhead workers or athletes, or where there is a potential risk to skin and soft tissue from fracture fragments may need surgery to 'internally fix' the fracture with plates and screws. An orthopaedic review will be made if you are a candidate for either of these.

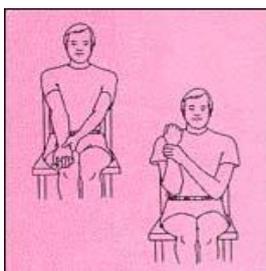
Exercises

When you are told it is ok to start moving your shoulder it is important to remember that there are safe and 'at risk' zones of movement that need to be avoided until safe to do so.



Zone A is the safest. You can move in this zone as guided by your therapist and surgeon.
Zone B is next safest. You should be careful moving in this zone without supervision and guidance.
Zone C is the least safe and must be avoided. Your shoulder is most vulnerable to stress on the injury when your elbow is in this zone.

It is important to exercise your hand, wrist and elbow to prevent stiffness and swelling in the joints. It's hard to achieve a fully straight elbow. This should be practiced several times a day until achieved. Take your arm out of the sling and supported it with the non injured hand and try and gently straighten the elbow. Do not force the movement but try to go further each time. Keep the shoulder still and the arm tucked into the side with this exercise.



Shoulder blade 'setting' is also very important to regain normal position of the shoulder blade so that the stabilising muscles of the shoulder (rotator cuff) function better.

See over page for more exercises.

Usually by 10 - 14 days it is recommended you start some gentle shoulder exercises. These are best done with 'pendular' exercises that can be done either standing or sitting with the sling on or off.



Perform the above exercise slowly in a swinging motion with a relaxed arm. Don't push into significant pain. Do at least three times a day for a couple of minutes each time.



Clenching exercises (or low load self resisted 'isometric' exercises) can usually be started within a week as they help to prevent loss of muscle strength and do not create unwanted shoulder movement.

Personal tasks

You might have trouble with many activities of daily living whilst in a sling. Lifting and weight bearing through the injured arm should be avoided. Some management tips include:

- **Dressing** - wear loose comfortable clothing preferably with shirts that do up at the front. Do not wear bra if able or use a front fastening one. Dress the injured arm first and remove it last. Lean forwards slightly to assist with this.
- **Showering** - use a shower stool if you feel unsteady. You can take off the sling but keep the arm by your side. To wash, dry and deodorise the arm pit lean forward and allow the arm to swing from side to side.

Rehabilitation can be long and difficult. It is recommended that you have a physiotherapist support you and your doctor with your recovery. If not already in process a referral to physiotherapy is recommended four to six weeks after your injury.

Contact the Physiotherapy department on 5454 8783 if you have any concerns.