

Clavicle (Collarbone) Fracture

The collarbone, also called the clavicle, is the bone over the top of your chest that connects your breastbone with the shoulder. Clavicle fractures are common; they can occur in babies (usually during birth) as well as in children and adolescents (because of the risk of being hit or falling during sports). Some kids fall on an outstretched hand, while others fall and hit the outside of their shoulder. The fracture can also result from a direct blow.

Symptoms

Symptoms of a fractured clavicle include:

- Shoulder pain
- Difficulty moving the arm
- Swelling and bruising around the broken bone
- Sometimes the break can be seen or felt just under the skin

Diagnosis

Your doctor will likely make the diagnosis based on the description of the incident, a physical exam and an X-ray.

Treatment

Treatment of a clavicle fracture in a young person is usually immobilization. Babies will be placed in a swathe for a week or two. Older children need a sling for up to six weeks. Adolescents can also be treated with a period of rest, but occasionally they might require surgery. Surgery is required when either the skin is broken or if the fracture is not in a good position to heal. Either way, complete healing usually occurs in three months.