

Clavicle fracture

Broken collarbone in adults

This leaflet provides you with information about a clavicle fracture. You should know that your personal situation may differ from the one described here.

You have a fracture in the collarbone (clavicle). The position of the bones is good and the fracture should mend properly. The fracture is in the middle part of your collarbone. The treatment consists of wearing a sling, having a short rest period and doing specific shoulder exercises.

Overview

- The fracture is in the middle part of your collarbone. This injury usually recovers well.
- An outpatient check-up is generally not necessary, so there is no need to make a new appointment.
- Wear a sling for support for the first three weeks. Take it off when the pain has subsided to a tolerable level.
- Do not move the arm above shoulder level in the first three weeks (see photos below).
- Please find an instructional video for reapplying the sling in the Virtual Fracture Care app.
- It is important that you do exercises during your recovery to prevent the shoulder from becoming stiff.
- Appropriate exercises can be found in this leaflet or in the Virtual Fracture Care app.
- If you have any questions or problems during the recovery, do not hesitate to contact us on workdays from 10:00 AM – 4:30 PM via the Fracture Hot Line: +31 (0)20–5994510.

The treatment

The fracture is in the middle part of your collarbone. This fracture is common and usually mends without any problems. The treatment consists of wearing a sling, having a short rest period and doing suitable exercises. This way you will experience less pain, the fracture will heal the fastest and you will reduce the risk of permanent injuries.



First week

- Use the sling for support
- Train your shoulder as much as your pain or physical complaints allow.

Week one to three

- Use the sling for support
- Train your shoulders as much as your pain or physical complaints allow.

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Week three to six

- Take off the sling
- Train your shoulder as much as your pain or physical complaints allow.

Week six onwards

- Use your shoulder as you were used to before your injury, depending on the complaints
- Keep repeating the exercises until your shoulder functions normally again
- You can resume sports or gymnastics. It can take up to three months before all physical complaints are gone.

Instructions

The following instructions are important to allow for a good healing:

- Have you received a sling? Use it for the first three weeks to give the collarbone a rest. When you go to sleep you can take off the sling.
- Please find instructions for reapplying the sling in the Virtual Fracture Care app.
- After your visit to the hospital, you can start training your shoulder as much as your pain or physical complaints allow. It is important that you start exercising in time to prevent shoulder stiffness. You can find the exercises and instructions in the Virtual Fracture Care app or in the leaflet. Increase the intensity of the exercises at a leisurely pace according to the instructions.
- Train your arm and shoulder depending on your physical complaints. This means you can use the arm and shoulder for as long as you can tolerate the pain.
- You are not allowed to play sports for the first six weeks. After that you can slowly start exercising, as far as your pain complaints allow. It can sometimes take up to three months before you can exercise without complaints.
- Physical therapy is usually not necessary. If you are dissatisfied with the function of your shoulder after six weeks, please consult a physiotherapist.
- Do you have pain? Use paracetamol if needed. Do not wait to take paracetamol until you are in too much pain. Always take it throughout the day. You can take two tablets of 500 mg paracetamol up to four times a day at fixed times. If paracetamol is not effective, you may use the painkillers you received at the emergency department in addition to paracetamol. Always use it according to the doctor's instructions.

Recovery

- Sometimes a check-up at the outpatient clinic is necessary, you will be told at the emergency department. The fracture usually heals completely within a few weeks. It may take up to six weeks before you can fully use the arm and shoulder again.
- After the fracture has healed, a bulge may remain where the collarbone was broken. This is part of the healing process and does not impair its function. In some cases, this bulge persists.
- Does the pain get worse or has the pain not subsided after three weeks? Please contact the Fracture Hot Line. If a check-up seems necessary, we will schedule an appointment.
- If you have any questions or problems during the recovery, do not hesitate to contact us on workdays from 10:00 AM – 4:30 PM via the Fracture Hot Line.

Rehabilitation exercises

Following a fracture of the collarbone, stiffness and loss of strength of the shoulder can occur. Below are some specific exercises you can do to prevent this as much as possible. You can also find them in the Virtual Fracture Care app.

Important! Do not overstep your own physical limits while exercising. Pain can be a sign of overexertion. If you feel pain, stop exercising. You may feel fatigue or muscle aches.

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Train your shoulder in a calm and controlled manner, and as far as your pain allows. Do not move the arm above the shoulder for the first three weeks. During the first week it is wise to wear the sling for support. You can then take it off if the pain allows it. Try to keep the sling off more and more, if you can tolerate it. Keep repeating the exercises from the previous weeks.

Do not proceed to the next step in the exercises until you are able to perform the previous exercises.

Schedule exercises

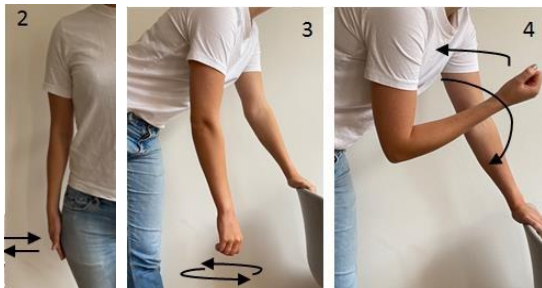
Week one

- Move the fingers and wrist - supported by the sling if needed - by making a fist ten to fifteen times a day and bending and stretching it with your wrist.
- Straighten and bend your elbow ten to fifteen times a day.
- Press your forearm against your stomach. Hold this position for a few seconds and let go.
- Press your forearm against the side of your chest. Make sure your forearm is against your stomach. Hold this position for a few seconds and let go.
- Bend over slightly and make small circular motions with your elbow (pendulum movement look at picture 1).



Week two

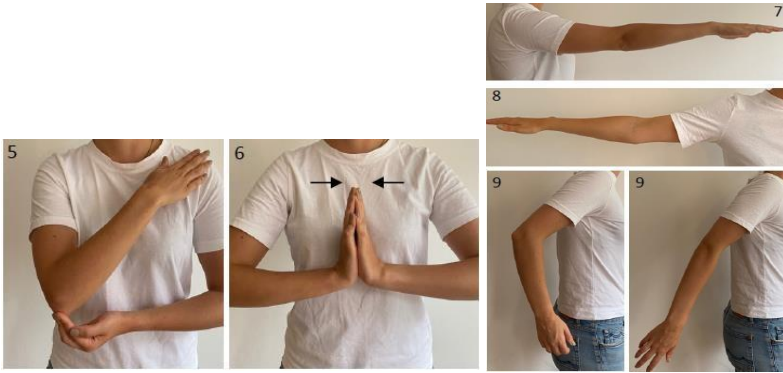
- Repeat ten to fifteen times in a row, three to four times a day.
- Press your stretched forearm against the side of your body. Hold this position for a few seconds and let go (look at picture 2).
- Bend over slightly and let your arm hang down, stretched. Make small circular motions, clockwise and counter-clockwise (look at picture 3).
- Bend and stretch the elbow while bent forward (look at picture 4).
- Repeat ten to fifteen times in a row, three to four times a day.



Week three and four

- Move your hand over your chest towards your healthy shoulder and try to tap the shoulder blade. Support your elbow with your other hand (look at picture 5).
- Place your hands against each other in front of your chest and press them together. You will feel the muscles at the front of your shoulder working (look at picture 6).
- Stretch your arm. Bring it forward and lift it to shoulder height (look at picture 7). Try to hold the arm here for a moment.
- Lift your stretched arm sideways up to shoulder height. If necessary, use a wall for some support (look at picture 8). Try to hold the arm here for a moment.
- Move your arm backwards slowly with a stretched or bent elbow (look at picture 9).
- Alternate the exercises. Repeat ten to fifteen times in a row, three to four times a day.

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Week five and six

- Repeat the exercises from week three and four, now gently lifting the arm above shoulder level. You may move your arm as far as the pain allows.
- Alternate the exercises and perform them at a leisurely pace. Repeat ten to fifteen times in a row, three to four times a day.

Week 6 onwards

- You may return to using the shoulder as you did before the fracture. Continue the exercises from the previous week until you feel that you can do the same as you could before the fracture.
- Swimming is a good exercise to get the shoulder function back to normal.
- If you feel that you can do fewer exercises due to less strength or pain, guidance from a physiotherapist is recommended. You can arrange this yourself with or without a referral from your GP.

Any questions?

Do you have any questions after reading this information? Ask your question via the Fracture Hot Line (088-125 42 02).

Virtual Fracture Care App

Find more information about your injury in our app. The app also includes exercises that promote your recovery. You can find the app in the App Store (iPhone) or Google Store (Android).

You can also scan the QR code. You will then automatically be redirected to the app.



Contact

You can contact the Fracture Hot Line via 088-125 42 02 (business days from 8:30 AM – 10:30 AM).