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Broken Collarbone

Patient Advice Leaflet

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Fracture of the Collarbone

A broken collarbone or fractured clavicle, is a common injury particularly in children and people playing contact sports.

The collarbone is considered part of the shoulder and helps connect the arm to the body. It lies above several important nerves and blood vessels, but, however, these structures are rarely involved when the collarbone breaks.

The collarbone is a large bone, and the majority of the breaks occur in the centre section.

Signs of a Fracture

- Sagging shoulder, down & forward.
- Inability to move the arm because of pain.
- A grinding sensation if an attempt is made to raise the arm.
- A deformity or “bump” over the fracture site.

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- Although a fragment of bone rarely breaks through the skin, it may push the skin into a “tent” formation.

Diagnosis

Although a broken collarbone is usually obvious, the doctor will do a careful examination to make sure no other structures have been damaged.

An x-ray is often recommended to pinpoint the exact location and severity of the break.

Treatment

Most broken collarbones will heal well, but surgery may be indicated if the break in the collarbone is comminuted (broken into many pieces), displaced (moved out of alignment), or if healing is not progressing had expected.

A simple arm sling can usually be used to immobilise the arm. A child may have to wear the sling for 3 to 4 weeks, but an adult may have to wear a sling for 6 to 8 weeks.

A bump may develop as part of the healing process. This usually disappears over time,

but a small bump may always remain.

Range of motion and strengthening exercises can begin as soon as the pain subsides. However, you should not return to sports activities until full shoulder strength returns.

Physiotherapy is not always required after this injury, it will however be arranged by your doctor in the clinic should it be felt necessary.

For any further advice please contact the Fracture Clinic on:-

**0151 604 7069
Mon – Fri 9am to 5pm**

or contact

**A&E
on the main hospital number.
0151 678 5111**