



PAEDIATRIC ACUTE CARE GUIDELINE

Fractures - Clavicle

Scope (Staff):	All Emergency Department Clinicians
Scope (Area):	Emergency Department

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<http://kidshealthwa.com/about/disclaimer/>

Fractures - Clavicle

This guideline is specific for the assessment and management of clavicle fractures

Background

- Three quarters of clavicle fractures are midshaft
- The majority of clavicle fractures are managed with analgesia and a broad arm sling
- Most clavicle fractures do not require Orthopaedic follow up

General

- Clavicle fractures are common in all ages
- The most common site is the mid shaft (three quarters)
- Approximately half are greenstick
- Epiphyseal (Salter-Harris I and II) fractures are very rare

Aetiology

- The most common mechanism of injury is a fall onto the shoulder
- In neonates, it may be the result of birth injury - the clavicle is the most common obstetric fracture site

Assessment

- Examine for tenderness and swelling along the line of the clavicle

- Infants may present with reluctance to use an arm without a good history of trauma

History

- There is usually a history of a fall onto the shoulder or outstretched arm or a direct blow to the clavicle
- Consider Non-Accidental Injury (NAI) in young children if there is an inadequate explanation for the fracture. Complete an Injury Proforma form for children < 2 years (A3 folded sheet located in the Doctor's offices).

Examination

- There is usually tenderness or swelling along the clavicle
- In the child with multiple injuries, clavicle fractures and upper rib fractures may be associated with **injury of the great vessels or brachial plexus**. Careful neurovascular examination of the ipsilateral arm should be performed.

Investigations

Radiology:

- On the X-Ray request form, write clavicle, rather than shoulder - AP view of clavicle and 15 degree cephalad AP view will be done. See [Radiological Requests - Limb X-Rays](#).
- A CT scan may be required for medial sternoclavicular dislocation
- For general description of the types of fractures, see [Fractures - Overview](#)

Management

- The majority of clavicle fractures managed in a broad arm sling will heal uneventfully and without complication
- Open fractures, tenting or blanching over overlying skin, maximal tenderness over acromioclavicular joint or altered sensation should be discussed urgently with the Orthopaedic Surgical Team

Initial management

- [Analgesia](#)
- Examine for neurovascular injury (if deficits evident manage immediately) - urgent Orthopaedic Team referral
- Ice the affected area
- Consider [tetanus](#) and [antibiotics](#) for compound fractures

Further management

Middle Third Fractures

- Middle third clavicle fractures rarely need reduction
- Support in a broad arm sling for 3 weeks and provide adequate analgesia advice



Minimally Displaced Middle Third Clavicle Fracture



Displaced Middle Third Clavicle Fracture

Fractures Requiring Orthopaedic Referral

- Medial and lateral third clavicle fractures should be discussed with the Orthopaedic Team and managed on their advice
- Urgent Orthopaedic referral is required for displaced medial or lateral third fractures, open fractures, compromise of overlying skin or neurovascular compromise



Lateral Third Clavicle Fracture

Referrals and follow-up

Middle Third Fractures:

- GP follow up in 1-2 weeks in non or minimally displaced fractures (no repeat X-Ray is required)
- Orthopaedic Fracture Clinic follow up in 1-2 weeks if significant displacement. See [Outpatient Clinics](#).

Lateral or Medial Third Fractures:

- Management as per Orthopaedic Team's advice
- Orthopaedic Fracture clinic in 1-2 weeks. See [Outpatient Clinics](#).


Health information (for carers)

- [Analgesia](#)
- Use of sling - child should wear the sling at all times (unless having a shower, bath). Sling should be a broad arm sling, appropriately sized for the child, and worn for 3 weeks.
- No contact sport for 6 weeks
- Provide GP letter
- Advise parents that a bony lump usually develops at the fracture site and will be visible for up to a year
- [Care Following Fractured Clavicle](#) Health Fact Sheet
- [Pain Management](#) Health Fact Sheet

Tags

bone, broad arm sling, clavicle, collar, fracture, fractures, mid shaft, orthopaedic, shoulder

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