

# Fractured clavicle (collarbone) - young children

## What is a collarbone?

The collarbone is an S-shaped bone that sits in between the shoulderblade and the sternum (breastbone). A fractured collarbone is a common injury for small children who have fallen over and landed on their shoulder.

## Symptoms

Usually kids will be quite upset after they have fallen over. You can sometimes see some swelling over the collarbone area. Sometimes the only way you will notice that there is a fracture is because the child doesn't want to use the affected arm normally. It doesn't usually hurt when sitting still or lying down. But when you try and lift up your child, or touch the collarbone, it hurts.

## Examination

For the vast majority of collarbone fractures, the only thing that is needed is a thorough examination. If you are unsure of exactly what happened, or if the diagnosis is unclear, then an x-ray can be useful. But this is something that is rarely needed.

## Treatment

Painkillers should be given for the first few days after the injury. You also need to be careful when moving/carrying/lifting your child to prevent more pain. Normal care for your child will not affect the fracture. For slightly older children, a sling can be good to use when your child is up and about, but should be taken off at night.

## Prognosis

Both the fracture and the pain get better relatively quickly. During the healing process, a small lump can appear where the fracture has been. This is normal and will disappear over time, but can often be felt up to six months later.

**Children's emergency department**

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