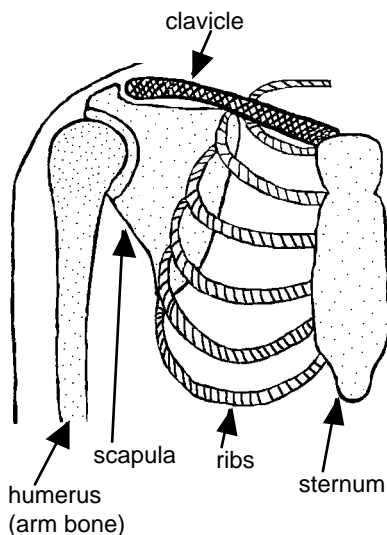




Student Health Center UNC Wilmington

INSTRUCTION SHEET: FRACTURED CLAVICLE

The Student Health Provider has diagnosed a fracture (break) of your clavicle (collarbone).



The clavicle (see diagram) is a long, thin bone located in the upper, front chest. The inner end of the clavicle joins the sternum (breastbone); the outer end joins a part of the scapula (shoulder blade) at the shoulder.

Normally, a sling is applied to the arm for treatment of a fractured clavicle. The sling minimizes movement of the clavicle: Pain is lessened, and healing can occur.

Most clavicle fractures heal nicely with conservative, non-surgical treatment. On occasion, a severe fracture, or what appears to be a mild fracture, will not heal properly. Follow-up with an orthopedic (bone) doctor provides the best care of your fracture: The orthopedic doctor can make sure the break is healing properly.

MEASURES YOU SHOULD TAKE TO HELP TREAT YOUR CLAVICLE FRACTURE:

- 1- Apply cold packs off-and-on to the area of pain and swelling for two days after the injury. Cold minimizes bleeding, swelling, and pain.
- 2- Wear a sling on the affected arm during waking hours. The sling can be removed during sleep (or kept in place if you are more comfortable).
- 3- Over-the-counter medications such as ibuprofen, acetaminophen (Tylenol), and naproxen can relieve pain associated with a broken clavicle. The doctor may also prescribe stronger medication for pain. Take the prescription medicine only if needed; do not take the prescription medicine and perform dangerous activities such as driving a car or operating machinery.
- 4- Avoid strenuous activity or exercise that could lead to reinjury of the clavicle. While activities such as shooting baskets, riding a bicycle, or climbing a ladder may be tempting, they are risky: A fall could make a mild clavicle injury a serious injury, requiring longer or more aggressive (surgical) treatment.
- 5- Call for an appointment promptly with your personal/referral orthopedic doctor. Schedule the appointment within five days of the initial injury. Pick up your X-rays prior to your appointment.
- 6- If you are having severe pain or other difficulty, see your orthopedic doctor or return to the Student Health Center promptly.