

Clavicle (Collar Bone) Injuries: A Guide for Patients

This leaflet is for anybody who has sustained injury to the clavicle. It tells you about symptoms you may experience while you recover, how to prevent complications and how you can aid your recovery. If you have any further questions, please speak to a member of staff caring for you.

What is a clavicle injury and how have I got it?

Injuries to the clavicle include fractures, severe bruising and / or ligament injuries. They generally occur following a high impact trauma such as falling from a height, a road traffic accident, cycling accident or high impact sports.

What are the signs and Symptoms?

Clavicle injuries can be very painful but you can expect this discomfort to improve over a period of three to six weeks, the more severe the injury the longer it may take to subside. You may have swelling or bruising and may have difficulty moving the affected arm. You may also notice, with some more severe injuries, a difference in how your injured collar bone looks compared to your uninjured collar bone, this may improve in time but possibly will not return to its original shape.

Do I need any tests to confirm the diagnosis?

A clavicle fracture is identified on an X-ray or Computed Tomography (CT) scan, in conjunction with a clinical review by the Orthopaedic Team.

What treatments are available?

Clavicle injuries are managed differently depending on the severity. While some people require surgery to fix a broken clavicle, for most the injury heals on its own over a period of weeks with the use of a sling and gentle exercises / movement.

Is there anything I can do to help myself?

During your admission to St. George's Hospital you will be provided with advice and guided on appropriate exercises. You should complete the exercises daily to help restore full range of movement. Your physiotherapist / occupational therapist will provide advice on managing daily activities as you might need to temporarily modify these.

Do ensure your pain is well-controlled by taking regular painkillers.

Medical evidence suggests that smoking prolongs fracture healing time. Stopping smoking during the healing phase of your fracture will help ensure optimal recovery from this injury. For advice on smoking cessation and local support available, please refer to the following website: [Quit smoking - Better Health - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](http://www.nhs.uk) or discuss this with your GP.

Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns about your rehabilitation after your clavicle injury, please contact the Trauma & Orthopaedic Therapy Department on 020 8725 0985 (Monday to Friday, 8:30am to 4:30pm).

Out of hours, please contact St George's Hospital switchboard for any nursing or medical queries: **020 8672 1255**.

For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit www.stgeorges.nhs.uk

Additional services

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

PALS can offer you advice and information when you have comments or concerns about our services or care. You can contact the PALS team on the advisory telephone line Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday from 2pm to 5pm.

A Walk-in service is available:

Monday, Tuesday and Thursday between 10am and 4pm

Friday between 10am and 2pm.

Please contact PALS in advance to check if there are any changes to opening times.

The Walk-in and Advisory telephone services are closed on Wednesdays.

PALS is based within the hospital in the ground floor main corridor between Grosvenor and Lanesborough Wing.

Tel: 020 8725 2453 **Email:** pals@stgeorges.nhs.uk

NHS Choices

NHS Choices provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make decisions about your health.

Web: www.nhs.uk

NHS 111

You can call 111 when you need medical help fast but it's not a 999 emergency. NHS 111 is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Calls are free from landlines and mobile phones.

Tel: 111

AccessAble

You can download accessibility guides for all our services by searching 'St George's Hospital' on the AccessAble website (www.accessable.co.uk). The guides are designed to ensure everyone – including those with accessibility needs – can access our hospital and community sites with confidence.



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