

# Clavicle Fracture

## Introduction

The clavicle is an oblong bone that connects the shoulder girdle to the trunk. It provides support and mobility for upper extremity function. Clavicle fractures account for 5% of all fractures and nearly half of significant injuries to the shoulder girdle. Anatomically, there are a few ligaments attach the clavicle to the scapula laterally. The sternoclavicular and the costoclavicular ligaments anchor the clavicle medially. The clavicle also protects the adjacent brachial plexus, lung, and blood vessels. People fall onto a shoulder, an outstretched upper limb or after a direct blow to the clavicle may suffer from fracture of the clavicle.

## Symptoms

Patients usually complain of pain, swelling, deformity, bruise, creptius and pain on moving the shoulder. There may be impingement of the skin and bleeding for those severe displaced fracture

## Diagnosis

The orthopaedic doctor will seek the history of injury and symptoms. They will perform a physical examination to look for the deformity, palpate for the tenderness and exam the neurovascular condition of the upper limb. X-ray will be taken to delineate the fracture.

## **Treatment**

In the past, clavicle fractures have been considered best treated nonoperatively, with good outcomes. Management typically included the use of either a shoulder sling or a figure-of-eight brace. The vast majority of these fractures healed, with variable amounts of cosmetic deformity. Recent studies have examined the different patterns of displacement and clinical outcomes of clavicle fractures according to their location. For those mid-shaft fractures, most of the cases can be treated by a shoulder immobilizer or figure of 8 brace. For those lateral end fractures, surgical fixation can be considered for those displaced fracture in order to improve the upper limb function. Surgical treatment should be considered for those fractures with skin impingement, skin break down or associated scapula fracture. You can consult your orthopaedic surgeon for decision.