

## **Management of Acromioclavicular Joint Dislocation**

### **Introduction**

Acromioclavicular joint is the joint over the tip of your shoulder joint. It is an articulation between the acromion and distal clavicle. The stability of the acromioclavicular joint is maintained mainly the coracoclavicular ligament and acromioclavicular ligament.

### **Symptoms**

This injury can occur after direct trauma or tackle to shoulder joint or fall on outstretched arm. After the injury, patient will have acute onset of localized swelling & pain over acromioclavicular joint, some of the patients may have deformity over acromioclavicular joint

### **Diagnosis**

The attending physician will look for deformity (step-off), tenderness over acromioclavicular joint. He will also examine for associated nerve or vascular injury and associated chest wall injury, fracture. X ray of shoulder would be performed and it will confirm the diagnosis. Stress view of shoulder (X ray of shoulder taken after weights are strapped to your wrists) would help to assess severity of injury.

### **Treatment**

Acromioclavicular joint injury can be classified according to different severity, depending on the degree of separation between the acromion and clavicle.

Mild injury may be treated conservatively with temporary immobilization with shoulder immobilizer/arm sling, followed by gradual range of motion, strengthening exercise. The lump on the top of the shoulder will usually persist, despite the healing of the joint but it does not affect the function of the shoulder. More severe injury should be treated operatively with reduction of acromioclavicular joint and repair/reconstruction of torn coracoclavicular ligament. Operative treatment may be more beneficial for young sportsman or manual worker. You are recommended to seek help from Orthopaedics surgeon to discuss about the definitive care of acromioclavicular joint dislocation. Rehabilitation after injury usually takes 4-6 months.