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Fractured clavicle in the newborn

A fractured clavicle in the newborn is a broken collar bone in a baby that was just delivered.

Causes

A fracture of a newborn's collar bone (clavicle) can occur during a difficult vaginal delivery.

Symptoms

The baby will not move the painful, injured arm. Instead, the baby will hold it still against the side of the body. Lifting the baby under the arms causes the child pain. Sometimes, the fracture can be felt with the fingers, but the problem often can't be seen or felt.

Within a few weeks, a hard lump may develop where the bone is healing. This lump may be the only sign that the newborn had a broken collar bone.

Exams and Tests

A chest x-ray will show whether or not there is a broken bone.

Treatment

In general, there is no treatment other than lifting the child gently to prevent discomfort. If needed, the arm on the affected side may be kept still by simply pinning the sleeve to the clothes.

Outlook (Prognosis)

Full recovery occurs without treatment.

Possible Complications

Most often, there are no complications. Because infants heal well, it may be impossible (even by x-ray) to tell that a fracture occurred.

When to Contact a Medical Professional

Contact your health care provider if your baby acts uncomfortable when you lift them.

Alternative Names

Fractured collar bone - newborn; Broken collar bone - newborn

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