Upper Arm (Humerus) Fracture,
Treated with Immobilization

You have a *fracture* (break in bone) of your humerus. This is the large bone in your upper arm. These fractures are easily diagnosed with x-rays.

TREATMENT

Simple fractures which will heal without disability are treated with simple immobilization. This is often followed with range of motion exercises to keep the shoulder from becoming stuck in one position. Unstable fractures are treated with an *open reduction* (operation) and *internal fixation* (this means a screw is put into the fracture to hold the bone in a position where it can heal). You have a fracture which **will do well with immobilization**. The fracture will heal well simply by being held in a good position until it is stable enough to begin range of motion exercises. Do not take part in activities which would further injure your arm.

HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS

- Apply ice to the injury for 15 to 20 minutes four times per day while awake for 2 days. Put the ice in a plastic bag and place a thin towel between the bag of ice and your cast.
- If you have a plaster or fiberglass ***cast***:
  - Do not try to scratch the skin under the cast using sharp or pointed objects.
  - Check the skin around the cast every day. You may put lotion on any red or sore areas.
  - Keep your cast dry and clean.
- If you have a plaster ***splint***:
  - Wear the splint as directed.
  - You may loosen the elastic around the splint if your fingers become numb, tingle, or turn cold or blue.
- Do not put pressure on any part of your cast or splint until it is fully hardened.
- Your cast or splint can be protected during bathing with a plastic bag. Do not lower the cast or splint into water.
- Only take over-the-counter or prescription medicines for pain, discomfort, or fever as directed by your caregiver.
- Do range of motion exercises as instructed by your caregiver.
- Follow-up as provided by your caregiver. This is very important in order to avoid permanent injury or disability and chronic pain.

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF:

- Your skin or nails in the injured arm turn blue or gray, or the arm feels cold or numb.
- You develop severe pain in the injured arm.

MAKE SURE YOU:

- Understand these instructions.
- Will watch your condition.
- Will get help right away if you are not doing well or get worse.

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