Upper Arm (Humerus) Fracture
Treated With Open Reduction (Surgery)

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 that will heal without disability are treated with simple immobilization. This is often followed with early range of motion exercises to keep the shoulder from becoming frozen (stuck in one position). Your caregiver feels you have an unstable fracture. Unstable fractures are treated with an open reduction (operation) and internal fixation. A screw is put into the fracture to hold the bone pieces in position while they heal. This is done to obtain the best possible result for shoulder function. These fixation devices are often left in place after healing. They generally do not cause problems and you usually will not know they are there.

COMPLICATIONS
The most common complication of upper arm fractures is *adhesive capsulitis.* This means the shoulder is frozen or difficult to move. Other complications include infection, non-union or malunion of the bones. This means the bones do not heal in the correct position or direction.

BEFORE AND AFTER YOUR SURGERY
Prior to surgery, an IV (intravenous line connected to your vein for giving fluids) may be started. You will be given an *anesthetic* (medications and gas to make you sleep). After surgery, you will be taken to the recovery area where a nurse will watch your progress. You may have a *catheter* (a long, narrow, hollow tube) in your bladder that helps you pass your water. Once you're awake, stable, and taking fluids well, you'll be returned to your room. You will receive physical therapy and other care until you are doing well and your caregiver feels it is safe for you to be transferred either to home or to an extended care facility.

TREATMENT & HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS FOLLOWING SURGERY
- You may resume normal diet and activities as directed or allowed.
- Change dressings if necessary or as instructed.
- Only take over-the-counter or prescription medicines for pain, discomfort, or fever as directed by your caregiver.

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF:
- There is redness, swelling, or increasing pain in the wound.
- There is pus coming from wound.
- An unexplained oral temperature above 102° F (38.9° C) develops, or as your caregiver suggests.
- A bad smell is coming from the wound or dressing.
- The edges of the wound are not staying together after sutures or staples have been removed.

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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