



UNDERSTANDING YOUR SURGERY

Distal Humerus ORIF

Overview

This operation realigns a broken lower end of the upper arm bone at the elbow and holds it with metal plates and screws while it heals. Starting movement early is essential, because this part of the elbow stiffens quickly after injury.

About Your Procedure

Why this surgery is recommended

- A complex or displaced fracture at the elbow joint
- A break the bone cannot heal correctly without fixation
- Allowing early movement to prevent permanent stiffness

What happens during surgery

- An incision at the back of the elbow
- Bone fragments realigned and held with plates and screws
- The ulnar nerve at the elbow is carefully protected
- General or regional anaesthetic; usually 1–2 nights in hospital

After Your Surgery

- A light sling for comfort — not a rigid restriction
- Elbow movement starts as early as **Day 3–5**
- Keep the arm elevated for the first 2 weeks to control swelling
- Physiotherapy from the start is essential
- No driving for **6 weeks** after surgery

Important precautions:

- Stiffness is the most common problem — consistent physiotherapy from the start is critical
- Worsening pain and stiffness can mean extra bone forming — tell your surgeon
- Plates and screws usually stay in permanently unless they cause trouble
- Full straightening may not fully return — discuss expectations with Dr Cosic

Your Recovery at a Glance

WEEKS 1–4

Early movement. Pain control and elevation

WEEKS 4–10

Progressive movement. Splinting if stiff

WEEKS 10–18

Strengthening. Light duties

MONTHS 4–6

Return to work and full activity

QUESTIONS YOU MAY WISH TO ASK

- ? What does my recovery look like for my job or sport?
- ? What are the main risks, and how likely are they for me?
- ? What pain relief will I need, and for how long?
- ? When can I return to work, and is travel safe early on?

MY NOTES
