

Brachioplasty

Patient Care Instructions

General Information

A brachioplasty, also known as the arm lift, is a surgical procedure that is performed to remove excessive loose skin or fat in the arms. During this surgery, an incision is made on the inside or back the arm. Extra tissue from under the arm is excised and the skin edges approximated and closed sutures. This improves the muscle tone and contour of the arm.

Pre-Operative Guidelines

Smoking should be stopped a minimum of 4 weeks prior to surgery. Smoking should be avoided for at least 4 weeks after surgery as well. Smoking can greatly interfere with healing and lead to postoperative complications.

Do not eat or drink anything after midnight the night before surgery. This includes no water, gum or hard candy. Blood pressure and/or heart medications can be taken with a sip of water as directed by your prescribing physician.

If you take medication for diabetes, then confirm with your prescribing physician how to manage these medications prior to surgery.

If you are prone to nausea or motion sickness let your anesthesiologist know on the day of surgery. Medications can be started prior to surgery or during surgery to help improve your postoperative experience.

Post-Operative Care

Take a stool softener/laxative, such as Colace, Biscodyl, or Milk of Magnesia, until bowels begin to function normally after surgery. A combination of anesthesia and pain medication usually makes this necessary for a few days.

Keep your arms elevated for the first 2 days after surgery.

You may resume a normal diet after surgery. Do follow a well-balanced diet and drink plenty of fluids.

Activity Restrictions

It is best to rest in an upright position for comfort and to decrease swelling. Decrease swelling by elevating arms above your heart. You can either rest in a recliner or in bed with 2-3 pillows behind your back and pillows under your arms.

Use your elbows as needed, but do not put extra stress on your shoulders. Keep a fluffy towel folded and tucked under your armpit.

Avoid raising your arms over shoulder level, or pushing or pulling anything for the first 2 weeks. (You may do your hair).

Do not lift anything greater than 10 pounds for 2 weeks.

Avoid any aerobic type of activity or strenuous exercise for 4-6 weeks.

Walking is encouraged shortly after the operation and can be increased over the first 2 weeks.

Do not drive for 1 week or until you are no longer taking oral pain medications.

You can return to work within a week as long as you have a job that does not involve heavy lifting.

Incision care

Your arms will be wrapped with ace wraps starting from your wrists to your armpits. Wear the ace wraps 24 hours a day except to shower.

To shower, remove outer dressings and wash over incisions gently with soap and water. Rinse and pat dry then reapply aces.

DO NOT use a bath tub, hot tub, swimming pool, pond or lake for 4 weeks.

No smoking or second hand smoke-could cause tissue/skin loss.

NO ICE OR HEATING PADS to the surgical areas-you may freeze or burn your skin.

If you have a drain, follow drain Instructions and bring record to post-op appointment.

Post-Operative Expectations

Swelling of the arms is common and will get better in about 6-9 weeks.

Swelling, numbness and tingling of the hands is something patients experience. Elevating the arms and removing the ace wrap will help alleviate some of this.

You may experience mild burning around the incisions that will improve soon after surgery.

Constipation is common after surgery in relation to anesthesia and pain medications. Stool softeners/laxatives, staying hydrated and ambulating will help bowels return to normal.

You expect some slight bloody oozing from the suture lines and swelling of the incisions. Gauze may be applied if it is bothersome.

When to Call the Office

If you have increased swelling in one arm more than the other.

If you have increased swelling and or redness around the incision.

If you have drain output greater than 150 mls.

If you have severe pain not relieved by pain medication.

If you have any side effects from medication: rash, nausea, headache, vomiting.

If you have fever over 101.

If you have yellow or green drainage from an incision or notice foul odor.

For medical questions please call 817-702-9100.

Follow-up Care and Appointments

You will be seen approximately 5 days after your surgery. If for some reason you do not have an appointment scheduled, please call 817-702-9100.