

POSTOPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS

Brachioplasty (Arm Lift)

Our goal is to ensure your safety, help you have the best possible outcome and help you feel comfortable during your recovery. Please follow these instructions on how to take care of yourself following your procedure.

GOING HOME:

- After your surgery, your surgeon will check on you before you are discharged and the nursing staff will ensure you are ready to go home. Please arrange to have someone drive you home the day of your surgery. To ensure your safety, you are required to have a responsible adult stay with you for the first 24 hours after your surgery.

IMMEDIATELY AFTER SURGERY:

- After surgery, it is important for you to rest. Please rest in an upright position for you comfort and to decrease the swelling. You may be most comfortable in a recliner or bed with several pillows behind your back and under your arms. You may use your elbows as needed, but do not put any extra pressure on your shoulders and avoid lifting.
- It is equally important that you move your body to ensure you do not get blood clots. In the days that follow, go for frequent short walks around the house to keep your body moving. Your aim should be to be up walking every waking hour of the day.
- Please do NOT apply ice or heating to the surgical area.
- You may experience nausea from the anesthesia following your surgery. You may wish to start with clear fluids and slowly proceed to a soft diet when you are able to do so.
- It is also very important that you stay hydrated, so please ensure you drink plenty of liquids (non-alcoholic).

THE GARMENT:

- You may be provided with a garment to hold your dressings and support your surgery in the optimal position. Please wear it 24 hours a day, including to sleep at night, for the first 6 weeks. It should be tight enough to feel supportive, but should not cause puckering or indentations in your skin. Please let our office know if the garment provided is uncomfortable or fits poorly.
- You may wash the garment as required, but please be sure you keep your movement/activity to a minimum while you are not wearing the garment.

INCISIONS:

- Sponge bath only for the first 2 days following surgery, being careful not to get the dressings wet.
- It is possible that surgeon may place drains. This is to prevent fluid from collecting under the skin. Fluid will range in colour from purple/red to pink/yellow. Your nurse will instruct you on how to empty the drains and record the volume at home. The drains will be removed when daily total volume is less than 20-30cc for two consecutive days (usually between 5 – 10 days after your surgery). After your drains are removed, you may notice pink/yellow fluid leaking from the drain holes or incisions. Contact our office if this does not slow after 2 more days. If you have drains, keep the sites dry and sponge bath only.

- If you do not have drains, you may shower on the third day following surgery. Remove the outer padding and gauze (yellow or red drainage on the dressing is normal). Please keep the tape on the incisions, this will be removed during your post op visit. Shower normally, then pat the tape dry or gently blow-dry.
- If there is drainage, cover your incisions with gauze and put your post op garment back on.

SUTURES:

- Remove the outer gauze dressing in _____ day(s).
- Perform the following DAILY:

If there are Steri-Strips on the wound:

1. The Steri-Strips will likely stay on for 5-7 days.
2. Wash the wound with soap and water.
3. Pat the tapes dry or use a hair dryer.
4. _____.

If there are no Steri-Strips or if they fall off early:

1. Wash the wound with soap and water, rinse well.
2. Apply Vaseline / Polysporin to incision TWICE DAILY.
3. Cover with bandage / gauze

Your sutures will:

Dissolve on their own.

Need to be removed in _____ days.

PAIN & MEDICATION:

- It is normal to have pain and discomfort following your procedure. Please take following medication as directed:

Tylenol

Ibuprofen

Other: _____

Prescription Medication: Celebrex (Celecoxib)

Prescription Medication: Morphine

Prescription Medication: Antibiotic

- Please take Tylenol and Celebrex (Celecoxib) as directed after your surgery. Do not wait until you are uncomfortable before taking your next dose. Maintain baseline comfort with these medications for the first few days after your surgery. If you require additional relief after taking Tylenol and Celebrex, you may take morphine or another prescribed pain medication as directed.
- If you have been provided with a prescription for antibiotics, please ensure you take the medication as directed.
- If you have worsening pain not controlled by your medication, please contact our office for instructions.

ACTIVITIES:

- As mentioned, please get plenty of rest, but you need to ensure you move around to prevent developing a blood clot.
- Please no lifting anything more than 10 lbs (4.5 kg) for 6 weeks (including children).
- Avoid raising your arms above shoulder level or pushing anything heavy for 2 weeks. You may gently wash your hair as required.
- Avoid strenuous activity for 4-6 weeks after surgery. Low impact activities such as walking are strongly encouraged.
- Please no smoking. Smoking may increase the chance of complications.
- Please do not swim in lakes, pools or use hot tubs for at least 4 weeks following surgery.
- It generally takes up to 6-8 weeks to feel normal again and resume regular activities. Please ask your surgeon if you have any questions about activity level during the healing process.

WORK:

- You will likely be ready to return to work within 2-6 weeks depending on your occupation and type of physical exertion required. If you require a medical note for your employer, please contact your Patient Care Coordinator and they will be happy to help you.

DRIVING:

- You must be pain free and off all pain medication before driving. You may wish to take a licensed adult with you during your first short trip.

THE RESULT:

- Your arms will be swollen for several weeks and will gradually settle into position over several months. It can take 6 to 12 months to see the final results from this procedure.

If you have any of the following, call our office (during business hours), your family doctor or present to the Emergency Department:

Signs of Infection:

- Pus-like drainage from the incision, grey or green.
- Redness that spreads beyond the incision.
- New pain, getting worse after 3 or 4 days.
- Fever, chills, sweats, aches and pains (flu-like symptoms).

Signs of Blood Collection:

- Rapid swelling, pain and firmness.
- Pain and swelling in one or both arms.
- Inability to urinate

Questions not addressed by this handout

Special Instructions: _____

POSTOPERATIVE CALL:

- The nurse assigned to your care may call you the day after your surgery to check in. Please let her know of any questions or concerns.

FOR AFTER-HOURS EMERGENCIES:

- Call the Queensway Carleton Hospital at 613-721-2000 and the Plastic Surgeon on-call will be paged.

FOLLOW UP APPOINTMENT:

- Your Patient Care Coordinator will call you to confirm your appointment. Please call us at 613-232-7777 if you have any questions or concerns.

YOUR APPOINTMENT HAS BEEN SCHEDULED FOR: _____