

Post-Operative Instructions for Brachioplasty

There may be information here that contradicts information on the general Post-Operative Instructions sheet. Any time this occurs, follow these procedure specific instructions. If you have any questions, please call the office at (775) 284-2020.

In recovery: each arm will be in a compression wrap to be worn 24/7 for 3 weeks. Arms will be elevated on pillows to help blood flow and minimize swelling to the hands. Usually spend 30-60 minutes in recovery.

First night home: Take it easy! Restrict your general activity to bed rest for the first night, getting up only to use the restroom with help. Drink plenty of fluids to help rid your body of the anesthetics

Medications: Be sure to take your medications as prescribed. Please note first 3-5 days are the toughest. Swelling and discomfort gradually increase over the first 3 days and then will gradually subside. Don't be alarmed if things feel worse before they get better (for example, day 2 you might feel better than day 4 – that's normal).

Pain Medication (Percocet or Norco): Only to be used as needed for 3-5 days. Always eat something before taking Narcotic regardless of time to help prevent nausea. **Narcotics may cause constipation;** you should take over the counter stool softeners. Colace is a good option but if you are prone to constipation, Miralax or Milk of Magnesia might be a better choice for you. Please prophylactically start taking a stool softener as directed the night of your surgery and continue to use while on the Narcotics. After 5 days, you may switch to Tylenol and after 2 weeks you may use ibuprofen.

Anti-nausea medication (Zofran or Phenergan): If you get nauseated with pain medication; take your anti-nausea medication 20 minutes before pain pill.

Antibiotics (Keflex or Clindamycin): You will be instructed on when to start your antibiotics on the day of surgery.

Nerve Medication (Gabapentin): Take this medication 3 times a day for 7 days.

Diet: Clear liquids or a soft bland diet is recommended the first night home (i.e. boullion, apple juice, crackers, and jell-o). If you are able to tolerate a bland diet you may resume a normal diet. Please keep in mind to limit salt intake, as this will make you retain more water.

Hygiene: No shower until 24 hours after drains are removed. Keep incisions clean and dry until drains are removed or 1 week post op visit. Sponge bath ok. Do not submerge incisions under water until completely healed without scabs (approx. 4-6 weeks). You will be wrapped with compression bandage. Must be on 24/7 to help swelling and prevent bleeding.

Drains: You will have a drain placed in each arm, "strip or milk" these drains as instructed, and record drainage when you empty the drains. You will not be allowed to shower until these drains are removed usually when you are producing **less than 30cc's in a 24 hour period/per drain.**

Position: When **sleeping and resting** stay on your back and keep your head elevated about 45 degrees. Prop arms up on pillows at heart level and place a pillow under your knees for the first week. You must change your position or get up and move around every 2 hours while awake to reduce the dangers of blood clots.

Activity: Day after your surgery walk around inside every 2 hours while awake (2-5 mins).

First week - Minimal activities for the first week after surgery. Minimize range of motion with arms to keep swelling down. Drink plenty of fluids, practice balanced nutrition and take your vitamins. Do not raise your arms above your shoulders for the first 10 days.

After 2 weeks, full range of motion with your arms is permissible, but lifting is restricted to 10 pounds or less for 6 weeks.

First 3 weeks after surgery, NO aerobic exercise/activities that raise your heart rate or blood pressure. NO heavy lifting, pushing or pulling of 10 lbs. or more for 6 weeks. Approximately 6-8 weeks post op strenuous activity will be allowed.

NO HOT or WARM compresses. NO COLD or ICE compresses to the area.

You can expect: You will be seen for your **first post op visit** the day after your surgery

- Sutures to be removed at 1 week post op visit.
- To return to non strenuous work within 7-10 days.
- Moderate discomfort, which should be relieved by the pain medications.
- Moderate swelling and bruising around the arms.
- Some bloody drainage on the dressings.
- No alcohol for 1 week after surgery or while on pain medications.
- No driving for at least a week and must not have taken Narcotic for 24 hours.
- No intercourse for a minimum of 3 weeks. If this procedure is done in conjunction with another procedure there may be additional recommendations.
- No smoking for a minimum of 3 weeks following surgery.

Healing: Regeneration of sensory nerves is accompanied by burning, tingling or shooting pain. This will disappear with time. If; however, this is accompanied by swelling, redness, infection or bleeding, then you will need to be seen in the office.

Call the office if you experience:

- Severe pain not responding to pain medications.
- Excess swelling or swelling that is greater on one side than the other.
- A bright red spot on the bandage which continues to enlarge or bright red blood in drains that seems to be clotting.
- Incisions that appear to be opening or becoming very red, hot to the touch or containing pus
- Any type of allergic reaction symptom such as rash, itching, etc.
- A fever over 100.4
- Call if you have any questions at **(775) 284-2020.**