



Post-operative care following Arm Reduction Surgery (brachioplasty)

1. Try and arrange to have either a friend or family member to pick you up and to stay with you for the first 24/48 hours in order to help you get settled in around the house.
2. Everyone recovers from their anaesthetic differently. Some people feel no side effects while others are more noticeably affected, feeling tired and even sick for the first couple of days.
3. Eat lightly with small meals throughout the day to minimise sickness. If necessary, cut food into small bite sized pieces to facilitate chewing and digestion. Salty foods can contribute to fluid retention and swelling so limit these in the first 7 to 10 days. In order to avoid constipation, eat plenty of fresh vegetables and dried fruits. Overall, try to eat a balanced diet to ensure your body is getting all the important nutrients it needs in the immediate postoperative healing period.
4. Drink plenty of fluids in the form of water and fresh juices, in the first few days after surgery. Avoid caffeine and carbonated drinks in the first few days. Dairy products in the first 72 hours after surgery can upset your stomach and make you feel sick and therefore it would be sensible to keep these to a minimum.
5. Do wear comfortable front opening and loose clothing at night and in the day that does not need to be pulled over your head.
6. Please rest as much as possible after returning home. Although you can gently walk about and do light duties, please avoid any excessive stretching or lifting during the first 7 to 10 days. You may return to light work duties after this time and commence light lower limb exercise after two weeks. Upper arm exercises and swimming can begin after four to six weeks. When exercising always try and wear a good pressure garment.
7. Although the majority of patients have only slight to moderate amount of pain, for the occasional patient, upper arm lift/ reduction surgery can sometimes be quite painful. The first week is usually the worst, after which the pain gradually subsides. Sometimes it may be that the pain is limited to mainly one side. This should not alarm you as healing can proceed differently in each side. Should you experience any pain, then take one or two pain relieving tablets (such as paracetamol OR anti-inflammatory tablets) as required up to 4 hourly. If the pain does not subside or is unbearable then please contact us for advice.
8. Continue to avoid smoking and alcohol for the first week after surgery. Do not allow anyone to smoke in your presence. Your arms will be somewhat swollen and sometimes bruised postoperatively. This usually settles in about two to three weeks. Sometimes swelling may be slightly different between the two sides. This is normal. However if a great difference develops between the two sides then please contact us for advice.
9. Mr. Murphy would like you to take a course of antibiotic for 5 postoperative days and take pain killers in the form of tablets as and when required. You may recommence any regular medication that you normally take (e.g. blood pressure tablets) as soon as you are able to drink, unless specifically instructed not to or this is mentioned in the DON'TS section of your information booklet. Please continue your Arnica as suggested in the accompanying instructions.



10. After your surgery you will notice a light white dressing on your arms covering part of your suture line. This is part of a triple layer dressing designed to protect the wound from any intrusion or infection. Occasionally from the outside, you may be able to notice some bloody staining underneath the dressing. This is usually some blood which has seeped from the wound, but is still contained within the dressing. If however the outside of the dressing actually feels dry to touch, then ignore this as it is of no consequence and will dry on its own. It will be dealt with and cleaned when you come back for your follow-up appointment.

11. The dressing must be kept dry and undisturbed for a period of about 10 days. **THIS DRESSING MUST REMAIN DRY AND UNDISTURBED UNTIL YOUR FOLLOW-UP CHECK AT TWO WEEKS.** If the dressing peels away at the sides please replace by applying a small sticky dressing over this area. At about 10 days your dressing will be removed and the wound inspected and lightly cleaned. There are no stitches to remove, as these are internal and dissolvable. A light crust may form on the suture line but please do not disturb this. Following removal of your dressing you will be allowed to shower but NOT bathe. Remember to dab dry the wound with a clean towel. Do not rub the wound.

12. Bathing can recommence after a further two weeks. Although internal, your stitches take about six to eight weeks to dissolve. Before that time if a small stitch should become visible or palpable, do not pull on it. Please phone and arrange for an appointment as it can easily be removed in the consulting room.

13. Very occasionally a small area along the scar may become red and inflamed. This usually represents a small dissolving stitch which has become superficial and is irritating the skin. If this occurs then you need to phone our office where we will arrange to clean this and dress it for you and give you advice regarding care. Although such an event represents a slight "hiccup" in your healing progress it always heals and settles with time.

14. Bruising and swelling are variable but can last up to four or six weeks. It is important therefore that a firm pressure garment is worn continuously day and night during the first six weeks.

15. Local massage to the scar is usually begun at around 4 weeks. You will be instructed to massage the scar at your follow up visit at about 4 weeks. Please do not begin until shown how to do this. Use your normal body lotion creams to facilitate this action but avoid preparations containing Vitamin E unless specifically instructed. A silicone gel sheet or BioOil (available at Boots chemists) can also be used to improve the quality of the ensuing scars. You will be instructed on how to use these at your first follow-up visit.

16. In the first few months postoperatively it is quite common for patients to experience intermittent, brief, shooting pains throughout the operated area. This is due to nerve regeneration taking place to repair the sensation and there is no need for alarm.

You should contact us if any of the following occur:

- a) Fever greater than 100⁰ Fahrenheit or 38.5⁰ Celsius.
- b) Pain not relieved by two pain relieving tablets.
- c) Significant swelling of either side of chest wall.
- d) Significant discharge from the wound sites after 72 hours.

REMEMBER IF IN DOUBT, PLEASE ASK BY CALLING THE OFFICE 9.00am – 5.00pm
MONDAY to FRIDAY ON 0161-232-2670/ 0161-232-2680 OR OUT OF HOURS IN AN
EMERGENCY. PLEASE CALL THE HOSPITAL ON 0161-226-0112.