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Brachioplasty (Arm Lift) - Post Operative Instructions

At home after surgery: Dr. Hoefflin recommends resting quietly for the first 48 hours after surgery. You should walk or ambulate around your home (with assistance) every couple of hours. Ambulating is one of the best ways of maintaining lower extremity blood flow and preventing venous blood clots (DVTs).

Positioning: When resting, keep your head and back elevated on several pillows (30-40 degrees) for 2-3 days after surgery, as this will minimize any bruising or swelling. When resting, keep your arms elevated on several pillows for 2-3 days after surgery to help minimize bruising or swelling.

Arm movements: Refrain from lifting your arms more than 90 degrees for the first 10-14 days after surgery. This will minimize any tension on your healing incision line.

Diet: Start with a light diet, preferably liquids or soups, and then progress to a regular diet after 24 hours. This will minimize any post-operative nausea. Avoid salt as it can promote swelling.

Oral Antibiotics: Dr. Hoefflin will prescribe you either Keflex (Cephalexin) 500 mg or Cleocin (Clindamycin) 300 mg (if allergic to penicillin or cephalosporins). Keflex should be taken 1 tablet, four times per day; Cleocin should be taken 1 tablet, three times per day. All antibiotics should be taken with food.

Drains: Small drains may be placed under your skin (in the arm) to remove any accumulating fluid after surgery. Our staff will instruct you on the day of surgery on how to perform these functions. The bulbs connected to the end of the drains should be kept compressed at all times. Please remove the fluid and record the output from the bulb three times per day. Bring this record with you to each office appointment. Drains are typically removed two to three days after your surgery.

Garments: Dr. Hoefflin will provide you with a soft compression garment, which should be continuously worn for four weeks. These compression garments help minimize any discomfort and swelling, and help contour the skin to achieve your final contoured result more quickly.

Discomfort: Any discomfort or soreness can be minimized with pain medication. Start with ½ a tablet of a pain pill initially, of which may be followed every 3 – 4 hours by

another. It is best to take pain medication with food. Keep in mind that the pain medication can cause constipation. A helpful adjunct is to replace every other dose of pain medication with a tablet of Tylenol (650 mg) to help minimize inflammation. Avoid driving or consuming alcohol while taking prescription pain medicine.

Showering: You may shower your arms on the 3rd day after surgery. Before taking a shower, remove compression garments and gauze pads covering your incisions. These garments can then be washed and dried on a cool cycle, and then replaced after your shower. Avoid directly letting the water spray from hitting your incisions, but rather let the water run down your arms. Avoid submerging your incisions in a bath, swimming pool, or whirlpool for two weeks after surgery

Swelling: Maximal swelling typically occurs two to three days after surgery, then begins to dramatically improve. Mild bruising typically resolves within 7-10 days after surgery. Mild or subtle inflammation may take up to several weeks to completely resolve. **Arnica Montana** (purchased at our office), taken both before and after surgery, can assist in decreasing any swelling or bruising. Your final contoured aesthetic result often takes 8-12 weeks.

Activity: It is important to refrain from any strenuous activities for the first 2 weeks after surgery. **After 2 weeks**, you may engage in light activity (i.e. light walking). **By 4 weeks**, stretching, yoga, or light-weight exercises can be resumed. Heavy weights and all pre-surgery activity may be resumed **after 6 weeks**. You may drive several days to one week after your armlift surgery, provided you can respond and stop in emergency situations.

Sutures: All sutures are absorbable and typically dissolve four to six weeks after surgery.

Sensation: It is normal to have spotty areas of numbness following a brachioplasty. This gradually subsides after 2-3 months as your body progresses through the healing process.

Follow-up appointment: Your first postoperative appointment to see Dr. Hoefflin typically occurs 24 hours after surgery. This should be scheduled prior to your surgery.

Massaging exercises: Massaging exercises are initiated one week after surgery, which assists in reducing residual post-operative inflammation as well as reducing the appearance of your incisional scars. Dr. Hoefflin will provide you with information on such exercises during your post-operative appointment.

Endermologie®: Using a safe and non-surgical patented technique, Endermologie® assists patients in reducing their post-operative inflammation by removing any post-operative toxins or water accumulation after surgery. In addition, local blood circulation and collagen restoration are improved. The final result is a more quickly achieved smooth and sculpted body appearance. Dr. Hoefflin encourages patients to start their Endermologie® program five days after their surgery.

[To read more about Dr. Hoefflin's post-operative Endermologie program, click here.](#)

Minimizing long-term scar visibility: Avoid direct sunlight exposure to your healing scars for the first year following surgery. Wear a wide brim hat. Select a sunscreen with zinc oxide and SPF of 30 or greater for maximal protection. Scars typically fade in months to a year after your surgery. You may start applying a scar cream (available at our office) to minimizing your scar appearance, starting at week 3. The cream should be used for 6 months after surgery.

Smoking: Do not smoke. This is important. Smoking delays healing and can increase your risk of complications.

Concerns:

Dr. Hoefflin can be reached 24 hours a day for any concerns. He can be contacted directly through his office or answering exchange at (310) 858-9105.

Please notify Dr. Hoefflin if:

- If you experience increased bleeding from your incision sites which does not stop after several minutes of gentle pressure;
- If your drainage output significantly increases from previous levels;
- If you experience a significant increase in pain not relieved by medication;
- If you develop a temperature above 101.5° F, or if you develop redness (like a sunburn) around your incisions;
- If you have any yellowish or greenish drains from the incisions or notice a foul odor;
- If you have any side effects to medications, such as rash, nausea, headache, or vomiting.

The quality of your brachioplasty procedure may be compromised if you fail to return for any scheduled post-op visits, or follow Dr. Hoefflin's pre- and post-operative instructions.