

DISCHARGE INSTRUCTIONS
Brachioplasty (Arm Lift)

MEDICATIONS

- You may resume taking your routine medications unless your surgeon instructs you differently.
- Do not take any supplements, blood thinners or aspirin for 1 week after surgery unless instructed otherwise by your surgeon.
- You will get a prescription for narcotic pain relief medications. Please refer to the Pain Relief Medications after Procedures document for more information on optimal use of pain relief medications.
- You do NOT need antibiotics

DIET

- You should start resuming your normal diet gradually.
- Drink plenty of fluids or water (eight 8 ounce glasses a day)
- Do NOT drink alcohol for 2 days after surgery or while taking narcotics.

BRA & CLOTHING INSTRUCTIONS

- If given a surgical bra continue wearing it for 24 hours (overnight).
- You may remove the surgical bra to shower. Make sure to put the surgical bra on after taking a shower.
- You may start wearing a sports bra (no underwire, opening in front) a week after surgery
- Do NOT wear an underwire bra for 6 weeks after surgery
- Wear loose, comfortable clothing.
- Try to choose clothes that button up or have zippers in the front for ease of dressing
- Try not to lift arms over head to put on T-shirts or sweaters for the first week.

ACTIVITY

- **SHOWER:** You may shower the day after surgery UNLESS YOU HAVE DRAINS. **DO NOT SHOWER WITH DRAINS.** Do NOT take a tub bath, swim, or whirlpool for 3 weeks or if there are any openings in the incision. Let the water run over them then gently dry your breasts with a towel. There may be some minor blood oozing from the incisions.

- If you have paper tape or Steri-Strips over the incisions, do NOT remove them. You may still shower with them and they will be removed in the office.
- **SLEEPING:** For the first 2 to 3 days after surgery, sleep with your arms and shoulders elevated as much as possible to help reduce swelling and discomfort. A recliner is a good place to sleep and rest. Use multiple pillows in bed to keep your arms up.
- Avoid sleeping on your sides for 2 weeks.
- For the first few times, you may need assistance getting into and out of the bed/chair.
- You are encouraged to begin walking. While sitting, alternate flexing and pointing toes several times each hour to help with circulation.
- To maintain circulation and prevent blood clots in your legs, it is important to get out of your chair or bed every hour and walk around for at least 5 minutes. You do not need to do this during your normal sleeping hours.
- **DRIVING:** You may begin driving 10-14 days after surgery; longer if you do not feel comfortable with your reflexes behind the wheel. Do NOT drive while taking narcotic medications.

CAUTION: Do NOT do activities that bring your arms above your head for 2 weeks (examples: lifting items to shelves or bringing arms above head to put on shirts).

- Do NOT push, pull, or lift anything heavier than 10 pounds (about the weight of a gallon of milk) for 6 weeks.
- Do NOT do any strenuous activity or exercise/ activities (running, weight lifting, aerobics, vacuuming) for 4 weeks. After you start exercising, go slowly over 1 to 2 weeks until you are comfortable with the exercises.
- Do NOT engage in any sexual activity for 2 weeks; resume when completely comfortable.
- Do NOT drive or handle heavy machinery while taking narcotic pain medication or muscle relaxant medications.
- Do NOT cross your legs or sit for more than one (1) hour in the same position while awake.
- Do NOT travel in a cramped space (car or plane) for 10 days, if possible.

WHAT ELSE TO EXPECT

- Some pain and discomfort for 3 to 4 weeks, although it should gradually get better from the first two to three 2 to 3 days.
- You may notice a small amount of drainage from the incision sites on the first one 1 to 2 days. This is normal. You may cover with gauze and secure with paper tape.

- If there are any sutures, they will be removed 1 to 2 weeks after your surgery.
- Do not be overly concerned if you notice a decreased sensation in your arms. It is important to remember that breast/nipple sensation can take up to 1 year, possibly 2, for full sensation to return.
- Surgical incisions are usually thin at first, become somewhat thick and red for up to 6 months, and then begin to fade. It usually takes at least 1 year to see improvement.

SCAR MANAGEMENT

- Your scar will be covered by a dressing. Do not remove it before your next post operative appointment. Please refer to our Incision, Scar, and Wound Management Information document once the scars have healed.
- Look at your incisions once a day to note any signs of infection:
- SIGNS of INFECTION include:
 - Incision area becoming red and warm to the touch.
 - Drainage leaking from incision site that is cloudy or pus-like. o Excessive swelling. Or more swelling on one side or the other.

WHEN TO CALL THE SURGEON OR OFFICE

- Fever over 101 (38°C) for 2 readings taken 4 hours apart.
- Marked increase in redness, swelling, odor or pain around incision, any excessive bleeding or drainage from your incisions.
- Pain is not relieved by prescription medication.
- Persistent problems with nausea or vomiting
- A small amount of red blood is not unusual but if you feel that the amount is excessive, please call the St Joseph University Medical Center and ask to speak to the plastic surgeon on call at +1 973 754 2000 or the office at 646- 777-0170
- **CHEST PAIN or TROUBLE BREATHING: CALL 911 or go to an Emergency Room**

FOLLOW UP

- Return next week for your follow up appointment with Dr Szpalski on 01/04/2024 at 11AM. If there are any questions or concerns outside of regular business hours, please contact the Plastic Surgery Division at +1 973 754 2000 or the office at 646- 777-0170 and ask for the Plastic Surgeon On-Call. The plastic surgery resident will be able to help you and contact Dr Szpalski directly.