

J. Jason Wendel, M.D.

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Recovery Instructions

ARM LIFT (BRACHIOPLASTY)

This is an outpatient surgery.

Have someone drive you home after surgery and help you at home for 1-2 days.

Get plenty of rest; follow a balanced diet.

Decreased activity and pain medication may promote constipation, so you may want to add more fresh fruit to your diet, and be sure to drink plenty of fluids.

Prior to your surgery, pain medication will be prescribed by Dr. Wendel and sent in electronically to your pharmacy.

Take pain medication as prescribed. Do not take aspirin or any products containing aspirin until approved by your physician.

Do not drink alcohol when taking pain medication.

If you are taking vitamins with iron, resume these as tolerated.

Do not smoke, as smoking delays healing and increases the risk of complications.

Activities

Walk as soon as possible, as this helps reduce swelling and lowers the chance of blood clots.

Do not drive until you are no longer taking narcotic pain medications..

Do not drive until you have full range of motion with your arms.

No lifting greater than 10lbs. for 4 weeks.

Social activities can be resumed 10-14 days after surgery.

Avoid strenuous activity or exercise for 4-6 weeks.

No submerging incisions under any type of water including but not limited to the ocean, pools, hot tubs, and baths for 4 weeks.

Return to work in 1-2 weeks.

Physical therapy is not typically necessary after this procedure.

Incision Care

If drainage tube(s) have been placed, you may shower 48 hours after removal.

Avoid exposing scars to the sun for at least 12 months.

Always use a strong sunblock, if sun exposure is unavoidable (SPF 30 or greater).

Keep steri-strips and/or surgical glue in place.

Keep incisions clean, dry and inspect daily for signs of infection.

What to Expect

After having surgery, it is expected you will experience some pain and discomfort even with pain medications. This is a normal part of recovery.

Postoperative pain is minimal.

Your arms will be wrapped with ace wraps or a compression garment immediately after surgery.

You will need to wear this garment for approximately 2-4 weeks after surgery.

You may remove surgical garment(s) to sponge bathe and/or shower.

Some swelling and bruising is expected.

There may be numbness around the operative areas.

Appearance

There will be a scar in the underarm area; this scar will be hidden when the arm is against the body.

If the incision extends down to and around the elbow, a scar may be visible.

Follow-Up Care

Drains (if used) are removed when less than 30mL/day for 2 days.

The sutures used for your surgery dissolve and do not need to be removed.

Staples may be used for your surgery and are typically removed 2-3 weeks after surgery.

Instructions regarding surgical glue removal and scar gel treatment/application will be provided at your post op appointment.

When to Call

If you have increased swelling or bruising.

If swelling and redness persist after a few days.

If you have increased redness along the incision.

If you have severe or increased pain not relieved by medication.

If you have any side effects to medications; such as, rash, nausea, headache, vomiting.

If you have an oral temperature over 100.4 degrees.

If you have any yellowish or greenish drainage from the incisions or notice a foul odor.

If you have bleeding from the incisions that is difficult to control with light pressure.

If you have loss of feeling or motion.

Managing Refill Prescriptions

For prescription refills, please contact our office during business hours (615) 921-2100 Monday through Thursday 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m and Friday 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

PLEASE NOTE: We are unable to refill pain medication of any kind after hours or on weekends. Messages received after hours or on weekends will be processed the next business day.

For Medical Questions, Please Call:

(615) 921-2100 Monday through Thursday 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m and Friday 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. After hours and on weekends, the answering service will contact Dr. Wendel or the plastic surgeon on call.