

CENTER FOR PLASTIC & COSMETIC SURGERY
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UPPER ARM LIFT (Brachioplasty)

You are about to undergo a brachioplasty procedure. The following is an instruction sheet to help guide you through your recovery. Doctor Fedele strives to educate each patient thoroughly about their procedure and what to expect during their recovery. The staff at the Center for Plastic and Cosmetic Surgery are here to help and provide a supportive environment in which to ask questions or concerns that might arise. Please review the following instruction sheet and write down any questions that you may have. Doctor Fedele and his staff want to make sure that you are comfortable with the procedure and have all of your questions answered.

PRE-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS:

This procedure lasts approximately 1-1/2 to 2 hours. You will spend about a 1-1/2 hours in the recovery room. You will be discharged home when stable.

You must have someone drive you home and stay with you during the first 24-hours following the surgery.

Do not take aspirin or aspirin products (Ibuprofen, Vitamin-E or herbals) for three weeks prior to the surgery.

If you are a smoker, you should stop smoking at least three weeks prior to the surgery and for three weeks after the surgery. Please note: Smoking increases your risk for infection, scarring, delayed healing or skin loss and wound healing problems as well as an increased risk of anesthesia.

Doctor Fedele can have your prescriptions for you prior to your surgery so that you can get them filled before the day of your surgery. This will make it easier for you immediately following the surgery and save any running around to fill prescriptions after your surgery.

DAY OF SURGERY EXPECTATIONS:

Initial discomfort is controlled with oral pain medications but you may experience continuous discomfort for the first 48 to 72 hours.

Narcotic pain medications can sometimes cause constipation. An over-the-counter stool softener (Colace) is recommended if you are prone to this.

Some nausea is normal in the first 24-48 hours following surgery. The surgery center can give you something prior to leaving. However, if you continue to experience nausea or vomiting, please contact the office to obtain a prescription for anti-nausea medication.

You must wear postoperative compression ace wraps that will help decrease the swelling and bruising in your arms. This must be worn from the hands all the way to the shoulder. It is best to wear this 24 hours a day for the first week and then as much as you can for the second week. You may take these off to shower or bathe.

The white Band-Aid strips called steri-strips, along the incision can remain in place until they peel off or until your first postoperative visit.

Any other dressing on the operative site should be changed within the first day.

You may have drains in the arms and you will need to record the output for each 24 hours in cc's (or ml's).

RECOVERY EXPECTATIONS

Week 1

You may shower the following surgery, if you do not have drains in place. If you have drains in, you should sponge bathe. Once the drains are removed you may shower.

You may experience oozing from the incisions; this is normal. Apply dry gauze over this and change the dressing as needed.

Do not drive while on pain medication. You may resume driving when you are off all pain medication and can comfortably hold the steering wheel.

Try Motrin 600mg every 6 hours as needed for pain in place of narcotic prescription medication when pain has decreased.

It is not unusual to have one arm more swollen than other or to have more bruising one side. The swelling can persist for 3 to 6 months and this is normal. The arm will eventually become softer.

Make a follow-up appointment within 5 to 7 days after the surgery. At that time we will remove drains you may have, check the wound and give you further instructions. At that time we may remove sutures and steri-strips as well.

Wear your ace wrap or compression garment from your hand up to your shoulder. This will greatly decrease the swelling and bruising.

Week 2 and Beyond

Expect bruising for 2 to 3 weeks up to 6 months.

You may stop wearing the ace wraps after 2 weeks.

You will likely be returning to your normal lifestyle including lifting and sports activities within 2 to 6 weeks as your recovery allows.

Walking is permitted within the first 2 weeks; exercise within 2 to 4 weeks.

Some decrease sensation on the upper arm is normal and this may persist for 3 weeks to 3 months.

You may have a bright red line in the area of the scar. This is best treated with Mederma.

This will help decrease the redness and give you the best scar possible but you will have a permanent scar in this area.

PRECAUTIONS

If you have questions or are unsure of your postoperative recovery, please call the office for instructions. If you experience any of the following, please call the office immediately and have the answering service contact Dr. Fedele: extreme pain, severe burning, fever, chills or a "hot-to-touch" sensation.