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**ARM LIFT (BRACHIOPLASTY)
AFTER CARE INSTRUCTIONS**

1. After surgery, it is important to have someone available to stay with you for the first 24-48 hours. You will be weak and drowsy and may require help the first few times you get out of bed.
2. While in bed keep your arms elevated to 30-45 degrees (2-3 pillows) to minimize swelling. Please take frequent deep breaths to keep your lungs clear (15-20 per hour).
3. It is very important to get out of bed (with assistance) as early and often as possible after your surgery to prevent postoperative problems. While the goal is to move about, even getting out of bed and into a chair will be beneficial. It is good to walk 15-20 minutes 6 times per day.
4. For the first two weeks do not lift your arms past 90 degrees at the shoulder and keep your elbows slightly bent. This takes tension off the suture line and improves the quality of the final scar.
5. A light diet is best after surgery. Begin by taking liquids slowly and progress to soups or Jell-O. You may start a regular diet the next day. Over the next 6 weeks, a high protein diet will benefit your recovery. Daily protein supplementation with pre-made shakes (eg. Boost, Muscle Milk) or soluble powder (whey, soy etc.) from a nutrition store is recommended.
6. Please take the pain medication as directed for the first 2-3 days after surgery. It is not uncommon for you to need it every 3-4 hours. Take it with crackers, Jell-O, etc. After this time, take the pain medication only if you have pain. If the prescription pain medication is too strong for your pain needs, over the counter ibuprofen (400-800 mg every 6-8 hours) can be substituted. In addition, you may be given an anti-anxiety/muscle relaxant medication that you may take as well to prevent aggravation of the pain cycle.
7. Frequently small drains are used to draw off any accumulating fluid after surgery. The bulb should be kept collapsed at all times. The fluid will need to be removed from the bulb every 3 hours. Please keep a record of the time and how much fluid is emptied from the bulb. Bring this record with you to the follow-up office appointment. Usually drains are removed between 3-7 days after surgery. The drains will not be removed if you have drained more than 30 cc within a 24-hour period.

8. You may have a clear skin glue dressing (Dermabond) over your incision. This will protect the incision for 7-10 days. You can shower with the Dermabond on starting 24 hours (1 day) after surgery. Use a mild perfume/dye free soap and gently cleanse around the incision lines. Let the dressing dissolve naturally. Do not peel this dressing off as it may delay wound healing and cause excessive scarring.
9. If Dermabond is not used, you will have a steri-strip dressing over your incision. This will protect the incision for 7-10 days. You can shower with the strips on starting 48 hours (2 days) after surgery.
10. If you have external sutures, they will be removed in 7-10 days and you will wear steri-strips for 3-4 weeks (Dr. Beck's office will provide the steri-strips).
11. Wear the arm compression garment continuously for 14 days. You may take it off to shower, but replace it immediately.
12. **DO NOT SMOKE** or ingest any nicotine containing products. This is very important for optimal wound healing.
13. You may gradually resume normal daily activities after 48 hours being careful to avoid any activity that causes pain or discomfort. Strenuous activities and exercises are to be avoided until 3 weeks after surgery. During this recovery period your heart rate should stay below 100 beats per minute and grand sweeping movements of your arms avoided.
14. Do not drive for 7-10 days or until defensive driving maneuvers can be performed without hesitation or pain. Do not drive while taking pain medication.
15. Prolonged soaking of the incision sites in a bathtub, hot tub, swimming pool or other body of water should be avoided for 4 weeks to allow proper healing to occur.
16. All incisions will be extremely sensitive to sunlight during the healing phase. Direct sun contact or tanning booths are to be avoided. Use of a clinical grade sunscreen with SPF 30 and zinc oxide (UVA and UVB protection) is recommended for at least 6 months.
17. Beginning at 3 weeks after surgery, apply a scar cream to the incisions to maximize wound healing. Use the cream for 6 months after surgery. The addition of a hydrating cream and vitamin cream will promote early softening and maturation of these areas.

WHAT TO EXPECT AFTER SURGERY

Sensations like numbness, sharpness, and burning are common during the healing process. These sensations may last several weeks and will gradually disappear.

Bruising and swelling of the arms are to be expected. You may find that your clothes do

not fit as easily as before. The swelling will gradually subside and you will be back to normal in 3 to 6 months.

Because of the removal of tissue from your arms, it will feel tight and your arm, shoulder and chest muscles will be sore. Be patient, this will relax.

Infrequently, a small collection of fluid will collect in the arms after drain removal. This is called a seroma. In the majority of cases, the body will reabsorb the fluid on its own. If you notice fullness or a “sloshing” feeling in the arms, please contact our office so we can drain the fluid.

Please note:

- If you have nausea, vomiting, rash, shortness of breath, or diarrhea after taking your medications, please call our office.

- If you develop a fever (oral temperature greater than 100°), redness and/or increased pain at the surgical incision sites, please call Dr. Beck immediately.

FOLLOW-UP INSTRUCTIONS

It is important to be seen by Dr. Beck after your initial post-op checks. He will see you for follow-up appointments at 1 week, 3 weeks, 6 weeks, 3 months, 6 months and 1-year post-op. For your convenience you may schedule your appointments at either our Southlake or Dallas office (see below). To schedule your appointment please call us at 214-818-4751 between the hours of 8:30 am – 5:00 pm at least 1 week prior to your desired date.

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS, PLEASE CALL DR. BECK

If you need immediate care, please call Dr. Beck anytime on his cell. There is no such thing as a minor question. I would rather you call me than wonder and not do the right thing, so please call my office, or email me anytime.

Dr. Beck’s cell: given at time of surgery

Dr. Beck’s office: 214-818-4751

Dr. Beck’s email: drbeck@dpsi.org

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