

## Brachioplasty (Arm lift) – Pre & Post-operative Instructions

You will need to arrange for another responsible adult to pick you up following your surgery. They should be available at any time during the day. In addition, it is strongly recommended for someone to stay with you for one night following your surgery. This is advisable because the anesthetic medications you have been given will make you feel drowsy and possibly nauseated.

### Prior to Your Surgery

- On the day prior to your surgery, you may eat and drink as desired until midnight. **DO NOT EAT OR DRINK ANYTHING AFTER MIDNIGHT BEFORE YOUR SURGERY.**
- BLOOD THINNERS
  - If you take a daily aspirin (ASA) for preventative reasons only (i.e. you have no cardiac history, previous heart attack, stroke, blood clot or atrial fibrillation) we ask that you discontinue taking it 2 weeks prior to surgery and 1 week after surgery.
  - If you take ASA or any other blood thinner (Warfarin/Coumadin, Pradaxa, Plavix/Clopidogrel, ect.) due to previous cardiac history then please contact your cardiologist or family physician to see if it is **safe** for you to discontinue prior to your surgery. Please follow their recommendations regarding stopping these medications. If they allow you to stop them 2 days prior to your surgery, please do so as it will significantly decrease the amount of bruising you experience after surgery.
  - **If you are on warfarin, please ensure your most recent INR is below 2.5. If you are unsure, please contact your family physician. Please ensure you notify our office the week prior to your surgery with your most recent INR value.**
- PAIN RELIEVERS
  - Several common pain relievers affect how blood clots. If you are taking any medications for pain prior to your surgery, please avoid Aspirin, Ibuprofen, Advil and Aleve for a period of 2 weeks prior to surgery and 1 week after. This is to avoid excess bleeding during the operation. Tylenol is the only medication recommended prior to surgery and may be taken as needed.
- HERBAL MEDICATIONS
  - Avoid Ginseng, Garlic and Gingko.
- HORMONE REPLACEMENT DRUGS AND BIRTH CONTROL PILLS
  - Please discontinue taking any of these drugs on month prior to surgery
- VITAMIN E
  - Avoid large doses of Vitamin E for 3 weeks prior to surgery and 2 weeks post-operatively to avoid wound-healing problems.

- Please arrive at the surgical centre one hour prior to your surgery. Be prepared to tell the staff the name and phone number of the person who will be picking you up. They will be contacted when it is time to pick you up. Dr. Dawes will see you prior to your surgery, as will the anaesthesiologist.
- On the day before your surgery, our office will contact you to confirm your surgery time and answer any last-minute questions. If you have any additional questions or concerns, you may call our office at (403) 571-3141.

## Following Your Surgery

- After surgery, you may move around as tolerated. You are encouraged to start gentle range of motion of your arms and shoulders, but do not strain yourself or raise your arms above your head for 2 weeks. Avoid strenuous exercise for 4 weeks. After the surgery, while resting in bed, move your legs every 1-2 hours for 5-10 mins.
- You may eat and drink as you wish. Dr. Dawes recommends however, that you start slow – with sips of clear fluids, progressing through soups and juices to a regular diet.
- **Avoid smoking for 4 weeks post-operatively.**
- You will be given a prescription for pain medications. These may cause drowsiness, nausea, vomiting and constipation. Straining, such as lifting, vomiting and coughing are to be avoided as this may cause bleeding. To avoid nausea and vomiting it is recommended to have some Gravol (Dimenhydrinate) on hand to take if needed.
- To avoid constipation, drink lots of fluids and eat foods with plenty of fiber. Constipation medications including **Lax-a-day/Restoralax** Lactulose, Senokot and Colace are available over-the-counter.
- If you have had a tensor bandage applied, this is to remain intact for 48 hours so as to apply pressure and prevent bleeding. After 48 hours you will remove your dressing and shower. You will have both dissolving and non-dissolving stitches. See sheets entitled **Optimal Wound Healing – Dissolvable Sutures with Steri-strips** and **Optimal Wound Healing – normal incisions** (attached) for specific wound healing instructions.
- You will need to wear compression garments at all times (day and night) for 6 weeks.
- You will have drains in place after the surgery. You must record the volume collected in the drains every 24 hours and change/empty as necessary. Once there is less than 30cc draining in a 24 hour period you will return to Dr. Dawes' office to have them removed (within 1 week of your surgery). Please ensure you call our office to schedule this appointment.

## What to Expect

- You can expect moderately severe pain, which should gradually improve over 3-4 days and should be relieved with medication.

- Swelling usually subsides after three weeks, but can occasionally persist longer. If swelling worsens and is associated with pain, please call Dr. Dawes' office immediately at (403) 571-3141 or (403) 998-4548.
- You can expect bruising around the incisions. It will be worst at 3-4 days post-op and may persist for up to 3-4 weeks. You will have a very small amount of drainage from the incision for a few days.
- You may experience a feeling of numbness around the incisions. This is normal and may persist for several weeks.

## Warning Signs

If any of the following problems occur, notify Dr. Dawes:

- Reddened, swollen incision (with or without foul smelling drainage)
- Elevated temperature (greater than 38.5 degrees Celsius)
- More swelling or pain on one side
- Severe pain that cannot be controlled with medication
- Excessive bleeding

**If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact Dr. Dawes' office at (403) 571-3141. If it is of an urgent nature, please contact Dr. Dawes at (403) 998-4548.**