



## Brachioplasty aka Arm lift Post-Operative Instructions

Dr. Waqqas Jalil | 7 St Thomas St, 208, Toronto ON

*Your guide to a smooth and confident recovery*

Nursing texting number: 437-494-3536

*Outside of business hours, texting is available on the nursing line. For emergencies, please go to your nearest emergency room.*

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### Dressings & Wound Care

- At the end of your surgery, your incisions will be covered with a **special skin glue and tape**, followed by a **soft, supportive tensor bandage** around your arms and/or chest.
- Please keep this dressing in place until your **first post-operative appointment (typically 3–4 days)**.
- At this visit, the tensor bandage will be removed, and the glue/tape will remain. You may begin **showering normally** with soap and water at this stage.
- You will then begin wearing a **supportive arm garment** day and night for **4 weeks**. This support helps control swelling and protects your incisions as they heal.
- A small amount of blood staining on the dressings is normal. If active bleeding occurs, apply clean gauze. If bleeding persists, please contact us.
- The glue/tape will gradually lift off with showering and will be completely removed by our team around **3 weeks**.
- All sutures are internal and dissolvable. If a small stitch knot becomes visible after 2 weeks, it may be gently trimmed at skin level.
- If a small area drains clear or yellow fluid, cleanse with mild soap twice daily, pat dry, apply **Polysporin**, and cover lightly.

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### Pain & Medication

- Most patients are pleasantly surprised by how manageable the discomfort is. You may be prescribed:
  - **Tylenol Extra Strength** – every 6 hours
  - **Celebrex (Celecoxib)** – every 12 hours for the first 3 days
  - **Hydromorphone** – as needed (no more than every 6 hours)
- Tylenol and Celebrex provide excellent baseline pain control; Hydromorphone is reserved for breakthrough discomfort.
- Because all narcotics can cause constipation, please consider:
  - **Colace 200 mg twice daily**
  - **Milk of Magnesia 15–30 cc at bedtime**
  - Adequate fluids + fruit intake

You may stop pain medication as soon as you are comfortable.

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### Eating After Surgery

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- After anesthesia, begin with **clear liquids** (water, herbal tea, apple juice).
- Move to light foods such as soup and crackers, then gradually return to your normal diet.
- If nausea persists, **Gravol** may be taken as directed.

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### Bruising, Swelling & Hematoma

- Bruising and swelling of the upper arms and elbows are expected and typically improve over **2–3 weeks**.
- Bruising may shift or appear to “spread” as it fades — this is normal.
- Mild asymmetry between arms is common in the early stages.
- A **hematoma** (rapid, painful swelling) is rare but serious. If you notice a firm, expanding area of swelling within the first 24–48 hours, contact us or proceed to the nearest emergency department.

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### Early Fever

- A mild fever ( $\leq 37.8^{\circ}\text{C}$ ) may occur on the first day due to residual anesthesia.
- Deep breaths and gentle coughing help clear the lungs and resolve this.

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### Scar Care & Massage

- Once glue/tape has naturally lifted off (typically around 3 weeks), begin your recommended **scar gel**.
- Apply the gel with gentle circular massage twice daily.
- After 1 week of gentle massage, progress to **firmer, deeper motions** to soften the incision line.
- Continue scar care for **at least 3 months**.
- Avoid sun exposure or tanning on new scars for **4 months**, as early UV exposure can darken them.
- For scars that remain red or raised after 6 weeks, **silicone sheeting** may be recommended.

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### Sleeping Position

- You may sleep comfortably on your back or sides immediately after surgery.
- Avoid sleeping on your stomach for **4 weeks** to avoid pressure on the incisions if you had a chest extension.

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### Mobility & Activity

- Begin **light walking** the day of surgery to support circulation.
- Avoid lifting, stretching your arms overhead, or heavy upper-body movement for **2 weeks**.
- Gentle daily tasks, such as raising your arms to comb your hair, are safe after the first day.
- Most daily activities may resume by **3–4 weeks**, and full exercise typically resumes by **4 weeks**, unless otherwise directed.



- Avoid driving for **at least 1 week**, or until you are no longer taking narcotics and have full comfort and mobility.

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### Tanning

- Fresh scars and bruised areas should not be tanned for **4 months**.
- Sun exposure before full healing can cause permanent pigmentation changes.

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### Emotional Recovery

It is very common to experience emotional ups and downs during the early phase of healing. Swelling, bruising, and slow scar maturation can temporarily hide your final results. These feelings fade as you heal and see your improved contour. Most patients experience increasing satisfaction and confidence as the weeks progress.

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### When to Contact Us

Please contact **Aspect Plastic Surgery** if you experience:

- Pain not controlled by medication
- Rapid swelling or firmness in the arm
- Redness, warmth, or foul-smelling drainage
- Fever > 38°C
- Shortness of breath, calf pain, or chest pain

If urgent and our office is closed, please visit **North York General Hospital Emergency Department** or your nearest emergency facility.