



MOUNT AUBURN HOSPITAL

TAYLOR & SULLIVAN PLASTIC SURGERY
HELENA O. TAYLOR, MD, PhD, FACS
STEPHEN R. SULLIVAN, MD, MPH, FACS

300 Mount Auburn St Ste 304
Cambridge, MA 02138

Phone: 617-492-0620 FAX: 617-492-0631

www.massplasticsurgeons.com



HARVARD MEDICAL SCHOOL
TEACHING HOSPITAL

ARM LIFT (BRACHIOPLASTY) AFTERCARE INSTRUCTIONS

- **Preoperatively**, in the week before your arm lift operation:
 - Consider eating pineapple, it may help reduce bruising
 - Consider supplementing with Arnica montana, it may help reduce bruising
 - Complete household chores and prepare meals for the first few days of postoperative recovery
 - Follow preoperative instructions with eating, drinking, and medications
 - Order two compression garments specific to your size. The garments do not need to be expensive. Dr. Taylor and Dr. Sullivan can make some recommendations of garments that can be ordered online.
- **Postoperatively**, after your arm lift operation:
 - You will need someone to take you home, and ideally stay with you for the first 24-48 hours, as you may feel drowsy. You may require help the first few times you get out of bed.
 - It is important to get out of bed and walk (with assistance) every few hours after your male breast reduction operation, while awake, to decrease the chance of postoperative problems such as blood clots.
 - Practice 15-20 deep breaths every hour to keep your lungs open.
 - When in bed or sitting keep your arms elevated on two to three pillows.
- Please take your medications as directed by Dr. Taylor or Dr. Sullivan to manage discomfort or symptoms following arm lift.
 - Acetaminophen (Tylenol) 1000 mg every 8 hours, space doses 4 hours after Ibuprofen so one or the other is taken every 4 hours
 - Ibuprofen (Motrin) 800 mg or Celecoxib (Celebrex) 200 mg every 8 hours, space doses 4 hours after Acetaminophen so one or the other is taken every 4 hours
 - Gabapentin 300 mg every 8 hours for 7 days. If you have dizziness, double vision, or significant sleep disturbances, consider stopping the Gabapentin.
 - Vitamin C 500 mg daily for 50 days
 - Oxycodone 5 mg – 1-2 tablets every 6 hours as needed for pain, though many patients may not need it
 - Colace 100 mg twice daily to prevent constipation, it is important to have a bowel movement each day. Prune juice may also be helpful.

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- Zofran 8 mg every 8 hours if needed for nausea
- Scopolamine patch may be placed on the neck on the day of surgery and can stay for 3 days to prevent nausea
- Eat a light diet for 2-3 days and avoid spicy food. Some suggestions to ease abdominal discomfort or indigestion after surgery:
 - Drink water or warm liquids
 - Prune juice to prevent constipation

WOUND CARE

- You may or may not have drains after arm lift surgery. The drainage bulbs connected to the end of the drains should be compressed at all times to keep suction. It is normal for red fluid and blood clots to form in the drains. Please record time and amounts of drainage over a 24-hour period – we will provide a form. Usually the drains will be removed when the drainage is 30cc or less in a 24-hour period. All patients heal differently and according to many factors. On average, drains remain for a week.
- You may shower or sponge bath the day after the arm lift operation with assistance and wash your skin as you normally would with soap and water. Avoid soaking the incision, although it will not hurt to get a splash of water on the wounds. Gently pat dry after washing.
- Wear the arm ACE wraps or compression garments continuously for 3 weeks after arm lift surgery, then for 12 hours of each day for an additional 3 weeks, and thereafter as needed for comfort. You can take them off to shower. The first time you remove the ACE wraps or garments, please have someone help you. If you feel dizzy or light headed, sit down or lie down. The garment helps control swelling and fluid build-up. You may choose to leave them in place until you see Dr. Sullivan or Dr. Taylor for your first postoperative visit.
- Most wounds after arm lift surgery will be closed with absorbable sutures that are buried and skin glue. The skin glue forms a barrier to water. Please do not remove the glue, it will fall off on its own after a few weeks. Do not apply any lotions, potions, ointments, creams or solutions (e.g. no hydrogen peroxide or alcohol) as they can be harmful to the fragile healing tissue.
- Do not smoke or expose yourself to smokers or nicotine as skin and wounds can be compromised.
- Infection is uncommon, though please call Dr. Taylor or Dr. Sullivan immediately at any sign of infection which would be signaled by fever, increased pain, new redness or swelling in the arms.

ACTIVITY

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- For the first few days following arm lift surgery, avoid raising your blood pressure or heart rate as it can cause bleeding. We recommend gentle range of motion exercises with your arms 3 to 5 times per day starting the day of the operation.
- Please do not drive until turning the steering wheel can be done safely and without pain (usually 7 to 10 days). Do not drive while taking pain medications such as oxycodone.
- Do not lift anything heavier than 10-20 lbs, run, lift weights, or perform strenuous exercise for 7-10 days. Do not perform arm muscle exercises for 6 weeks.
- Massage can help increase circulation and soften firm areas under the skin. Please wait at least 3 to 4 weeks after arm lift surgery to start massage to avoid increased swelling.

GENERAL OUTCOMES

- Moderate swelling and bruising of your arms and hands is to be expected. Please be patient. The swelling and feeling of tightness will gradually subside over the following weeks. The compression garment will help with swelling. Bruising may last for a few weeks and will move down your arms due to gravity.
- It is not uncommon for a small wound to develop along the incision in the armpit. These typically appear 2 to 3 weeks after the operation, can be treated with soap and water wash and a dry gauze, and they will heal on their own in a few days to weeks.
- The incisions often appear lumpy and bumpy. This is normal and the incisions will flatten over a few weeks.
- Sensations like numbness, shooting pain, and burning are common during the healing process, may last several weeks, and gradually disappear. If the arms or elbow area are sensitive after arm lift surgery, it is best to desensitize them with gentle touch.
- Scars and tissues take one full year to mature. You may notice that they become red, raised and firm for several weeks to months before becoming soft, flat and pale. Avoid Vitamin E as it can irritate the skin and scars. Mederma has no proven benefit and is not worth the expense. All incisions will be sensitive to sunlight during the healing phase. Direct sun exposure or tanning booths are to be avoided. Silicone cream, such as Biocorneum Advanced Scar Treatment, or skin moisturizer with sunscreen and gentle massage may be helpful.
- A small amount bleeding from the arm incisions is expected. Please call our office (617-492-0620) if you have:
 - Continuous bleeding
 - Significantly more swelling on one arm when compared to the other
 - Worsening pain
 - Fever, spreading redness or irritation of the skin

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- Shortness of breath

It is important to be seen by Dr. Taylor or Dr. Sullivan after your male breast reduction operation. They will see you in follow-up appointments at 1 week, 3-6 months, and 1 year or as often as needed post-op. Call to schedule your appointments at Taylor & Sullivan Plastic Surgery office at (617) 492-0620 between the hours of 8:30 – 5:00 or visit our webpage at www.massplasticsurgeons.com. We are always available for postoperative concerns or emergencies and can be reached through our paging service 24 hours per day at (617) 492-0620.

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