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BRACHIOPLASTY AFTER-CARE INSTRUCTIONS

INTRO:

Congratulations on your decision to get an arm lift, or brachioplasty. These after-care instructions, along with our office staff, will help guide you through your recovery process. It is crucial that you and your caretakers **read through these instructions both *BEFORE AND AFTER SURGERY***.

HAVE CARETAKER WITH YOU:

- Following surgery, have an adult caretaker stay with you for the first 24-48 hours. You will be drowsy from the anesthesia and will not be able to drive for at least 24 hours.

WALKING:

- It is imperative to get out of bed early, and often (with assistance) following surgery to prevent postoperative problems such as blood clots. A reasonable goal would be to go for a 15-minute walk 5-6 times per day or to get up every hour to walk to the restroom. This will help reduce the risk of blood clots developing by encouraging blood flow throughout your legs.
- If you are sitting or lying down, move your ankles up and down and in a circular motion a couple times each hour to help increase blood flow.
- If you have shortness of breath, leg swelling, and/or leg pain at any point in your postoperative healing, go to an emergency department immediately (or call 911). This could possibly be a blood clot.

ARM COMPRESSION GARMENTS:

- Wear the bandage that we have provided until your first shower which is 3 days after surgery.
- After your first shower, please wear an arm compression garment for a total of 12 weeks following surgery.
 - You can purchase garments online at www.marenagroup.com or type in “compression garment for arm lift on Amazon or a medical supply store.
- The arm compression garment is to be worn 24/7 for the first 4 weeks following surgery.
- After 4 weeks, the garment is to be worn for 16-24/hours daily for an additional 8 weeks.

SHOWERING:

- You may shower, but not bathe, 3 days after surgery.
- Remove all garments, dressings and bandages to shower.
- Wash the surgical area with soap and lukewarm water.
- After showering, carefully pat dry or air dry.
- Once dry, put on your new arm compression garment.
- Make sure someone is with you at your first shower.

PAIN AND PAIN MEDICATION:

- Take pain medication with food.

- Vicodin (Hydrocodone + Acetaminophen) or Percocet (Oxycodone + Acetaminophen) should be taken as directed:
 - Mild to moderate pain: 1 tablet every 4-6 hours
 - Severe pain: 2 tablets every 4-6 hours
- If your pain is mild, you may opt to take Tylenol (Acetaminophen) 1000 mg every 8 hours (which is 2 tablets of the Extra Strength Tylenol purchased over-the-counter).
- Take a stool softener, such as Colace, while taking pain medication to help prevent constipation.
- DO NOT DRIVE WHILE TAKING PAIN MEDICATION.
- DO NOT DRINK ALCOHOL WHILE TAKING PAIN MEDICATIONS.
- Take pain medication only if needed. The quicker you can wean off the pain medications, the better you will feel and heal.

SUPPLEMENTS:

- Do not take aspirin or ibuprofen for 10 days after surgery
- Do not take herbal supplements (vitamin E, fish oil, hormone replacements) for 10 days after surgery.
- Phentermine or appetite suppressants should not be taken until 6 weeks after surgery, since they increase heart rate and blood pressure which could interfere with your recovery.

DO NOT SMOKE:

- This is very important because smoking (tobacco, marijuana, or vapes) can result in a lack of blood supply to the tissues and fat, causing the tissue to die or delayed healing.
- Smoking can resume 4 weeks after surgery as long as there are no other complications present.

POSITIONING:

- Raise your arms above heart level when sitting in order to decrease swelling to your hands. You can use pillows to achieve this position.
- Avoid lifting your arms above your head for 3 weeks.

LUNG EXERCISES:

- You will be given a spirometer to help increase volume in your lungs to prevent atelectasis, or collapsed lungs, which can be a result of anesthesia and the physical stress your body is going through. It is best to take 10 breaths per hour with the spirometer for the first 72 hours.
- Remaining hydrated (64 oz of water per day) and regular walks will also help to prevent these occurrences.

DIET:

- A light diet is best after surgery. Start with liquids and progress to soft foods like soups and Jell-O.
- Stay on a soft diet with high protein for 2-3 days following surgery. Avoid spicy foods, sugar-free sweeteners and carbonated drinks to reduce gas, bloating and nausea.

ACTIVITIES:

- Do not lift anything heavier than 10 pounds for the first 6 weeks.
- After 3 to 4 weeks gradual resumption of athletic activities is allowed.
- Refrain from raising blood pressure for three weeks after surgery to prevent bleeding.
 - No hot baths, showers, spas for the first three weeks.

SUTURES/SCAR TREATMENT:

- There will be a scar in the underarm area that may extend down to and around the elbow. This scar will be hidden when your arm is down against your body.
- Sutures will be removed between 12-14 days after surgery depending on your healing progress.
- Do not apply anything on your incisions for 3 weeks.
- Keep the incisions dry and clean.
- Avoid direct sun light on incisions for 6 months. Use liberal quantities of sunscreen with UVA and UVB protection on the sutures for at least 6 months.
- At 4 weeks, you can begin using silicone scar patches from the drugstore, or Silagen® Scar Refinement System that we sell in the office on incision sites. Silagen® will help flatten and soften scars and reduce redness, itching, and pain on incisions.

EXPECTATIONS:

- Moderate swelling of your arms is to be expected. You may find that your clothes don't fit as easily as before.
- The swelling will gradually subside within 3-6 months.
- Swelling will be at its worst between 3 - 5 days.
- Bruising is to be expected and will improve over the next 2 -3 weeks.
- Drainage from the incision site is expected the first 72 hours.
- Hand swelling is normal. You may loosen up the bandages if your hands are starting to hurt. You can also wrap your hand in an ACE bandage should it become swollen and uncomfortable.
- A burning sensation or sharp shooting pains around the surgical area and incision line is normal and indicative of nerve regeneration. These will burn out by 9 months.
- It is not unusual for a patient to experience a day or two of "blues" one to three weeks after surgery. After the initial excitement of the operation has worn off, but before you look as good as you would like to, this mild depression might be experienced. This is not unusual and is no cause for alarm as it should pass quickly.
- It will take 6 months to see final results. In the interim, it is common to see incision asymmetry, arm asymmetry, day-to-day swelling changes, and pleating along your incision line.

FOLLOW-UP APPOINTMENTS:

- Every patient heals at different rates, but you will be seen several times for post-op appointments. Typically, they are scheduled for day one, 1 week, 2-3 weeks, 6 weeks, 3 months, and 6 months after surgery.
- The purpose of these appointments is to check your healing progress.
- Please call to schedule your appointments. The Beverly Hills office phone number is (310) 273-1001 and the Santa Barbara office phone number is (805) 898-9299.

QUESTIONS & CONCERNS:

- If you have questions or concerns regarding your procedure, please email assistant@drbrent.com or email Dr. Brent Moelleken at drbrent@drbrent.com
- Please call the office at (310) 273-1001 if you have increased pain at surgical incision sites, redness, sudden swelling, warmth, pus, drainage, or a fever greater than 101.5°F.
- Please visit an emergency room or call 911 if you have shortness of breath or leg swelling with pain to rule out a pulmonary embolism or blood clot which could be deadly if left untreated.

HELPFUL ITEMS TO PURCHASE BEFORE SURGERY:

- Stool softener (i.e., Colace)
- Arnica pills (oral herbal supplement to help with bruising)
- Arm compression garments
- Thermometer (monitor your temperature after surgery and make sure it stays below 101.5°F)

ADDITIONAL POST-OP NOTES:
