

BRACHIOPLASTY

Pre-Operative and Post-Operative Patient Instructions

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[Preop Instructions Video](#)



[Management of Drains](#)

PRE-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS FOR BRACHIOPLASTY

SHOPPING LIST

- Prescriptions**

Submitted to your pharmacy. Your pharmacy should contact you when ready to pick up.

- Stool Softener (preferably MiraLAX)**

Helps with constipation associated with narcotic pain relievers.

- Tylenol (Acetaminophen)**

Alternative to narcotic pain medication if pain is not severe. Do NOT take NSAIDS.

- Compression Garment**

Provided to you by The Naderi Center.



NIGHT BEFORE SURGERY

- **DO NOT EAT OR DRINK ANYTHING AFTER MIDNIGHT OR SURGERY WILL BE CANCELLED.** If prescribed, take medications with a small sip of water.
- **Set Up Home Recovery Area:** This may include pillows, blankets, books, television, and anything else to assist with a comfortable recovery.
- **Bathing:** You can shower but do not apply lotion, perfume, hair product, etc.

DAY OF SURGERY

- **Dress Comfortably:** Dress in comfortable, clean, and loose-fitting clothes. Shirts that can be buttoned or zipped up are preferred.
- **Arrival to Facility:** Arrive to the assigned facility of your procedure at the time stated in your pre-operative packet. Remember to bring a form of identification.
- **Do NOT wear** any makeup, jewelry, cosmetic creams, hair products, deodorant, sunscreen, and remove all piercings.

PRE-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS FOR BRACHIOPLASTY

NIGHT OF SURGERY

- **Movement is important:** Make sure to get out of bed and be up and walking around immediately after your surgery. When lying down in bed or on the couch, make sure you are moving your legs and ankles. Take deep breaths frequently to keep your lungs clear.
- **Sleep:** Sleep on your back with your head and legs elevated (1-2 pillows). Since the incisions are on the front and the back it can be difficult to get comfortable. Sleeping on your side is ok too if that allows you to feel less pulling at the incision sites. Continue this for one to two weeks.

MEDICATIONS

- **Pain:** You will be prescribed a pain medication for post-operative pain control. If your discomfort after surgery is not strong you are welcomed to take Tylenol in place of the prescribed medication. Do not take the Tylenol with the pain medication, often the medication you are prescribed will have Tylenol in it. **Do not exceed 4,000 mg of Tylenol in any 24-hour period.** Take medication with food to minimize risk of nausea.
- **Nausea:** If you are experiencing nausea, which is common after general anesthesia as well as a known side effect of some stronger pain medications, we advise that you take your nausea medication.

- **Constipation:** You will experience constipation if taking narcotic pain relievers. MiraLAX or other over the counter laxatives are recommended. Do not wait to take until you are constipated. Begin treatment with narcotic use.
- **Medications to Avoid:** Take only those medications approved or prescribed by your surgeon. Avoid medications containing aspirin or ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin, Ibuprofen, others) for two weeks before and after surgery. These medications may increase bleeding.
- **Substances to Avoid:** Avoid alcohol, nicotine, and caffeine, for these will dramatically slow the healing process.

NUTRITION

- **Diet:** A light low-fat diet is best after surgery. You may start a regular diet after your surgery if you are not feeling nauseous or vomiting.
- **Hydration:** Stay hydrated by drinking 8-10 glasses of water a day. Avoid alcohol for two weeks and while you are still having to take pain medications.

ACTIVITY

- **Physical Activity: Do NOT remain in bed all day.** Although it will be uncomfortable it is imperative that you move around and at least take walks around the house to facilitate healing. Avoid lifting more than 5lbs, straining, bending, or any cardio activity.
- **Exercise:** Light physical activity may be resumed 3-4 weeks after surgery. Remember to start easy and build back up to your previous exercise levels. At 4-6 weeks or when further instructed by your surgeon, more intense exercise can be started. Just know that swelling may transiently be worse with exercise.
- **Compression Garment:** Expect to wear a compression garment all day and night for the first three weeks, and for a few weeks thereafter as wanted or suggested by your surgeon. The garment should fit snug but not too tight that you have trouble breathing or you develop wounds or blisters from the compression. Always wear your garment except for when you are showering or to wash it. This will help with minimizing swelling and help in contouring the body.
- **Driving:** Do NOT operate a vehicle or make important decisions until you have been off pain medications for 24 hours. Use good judgment. After being off pain medications automobile travel can be resumed, although frequent breaks are needed approximately every 2 hours to prevent blood pooling and clots.

- **Return to work:** Most patients require approximately 7-14 days off work depending on their job responsibilities. Returning to work with a light schedule initially or even part-time can be beneficial as well.
- **Travel:** Automobile travel can resume though frequent breaks are needed, approximately every 2 hours to prevent blood pooling and clots. Airline travel is restricted until 1 week postop. You will notice increased swelling with airline travel, and this can happen even 6-8 weeks postop due to the pressure changes.
- **Sexual Intercourse:** Sexual activity can be resumed when you feel ready with no restrictions and incisions have adequately healed.

BATHING

- **Showering:** You may shower with assistance the day following surgery. Remove your garment. Incisions are covered with a waterproof dressing and require no attention. Replace garment after your shower.
- **Hot Tubs/Baths/Swimming Pools:** No tub baths or jacuzzi until your incisions have healed, and approved by your surgeon, which is usually around 3-4 weeks. It is best to wait one month for hot tubs as they tend to have more bacteria than regular chlorinated swimming pools.

HOW TO TAKE CARE OF YOUR INCISIONS

- **Incisions:** Your incisions are covered with a waterproof dressing. No dressing changes or incision care is required. After your first postop visit, the dressing will be removed, and a special scar tape will be applied. Additional tape is provided so you can continue a planned scar regimen.
- **Stitches:** All stitches are dissolvable.
- **Sun Exposure:** Avoid and minimize sun exposure. Use SPF 30 or greater when outdoors. Even a mild sunburn can worsen swelling and irritate an incision that is healing.
- **Scar gel:** Scars may take up to a year to fully heal. After your incisions have completely healed and when your doctor has told you it is safe, you can begin to use silicone-based gel on your scars to improve healing.

WHAT TO EXPECT

- **Drainage:** Drainage can occur from the incision sites for the first week after surgery. The drainage will be blood tinged. You may use gauze or a light pad to reinforce post-op dressings if this occurs.



- **Bruising:** You can expect to have bruising on the affected and surrounding area. Most bruises will heal after about 2-4 weeks. The bruise will go from a purplish color to a yellow/green shade as it starts to resolve.
- **Swelling:** Swelling in lifted and all surrounding areas is to be expected for weeks and sometimes months. The swelling can improve with intermittent rest and compression garments. Exercise and physical activity can transiently worsen swelling but is encouraged.
- **Itching:** Itching at the incision sites and surrounding areas is normal for a few days or weeks. You may take Benadryl to help with this.
- **Pain:** It is normal to experience tightness, pressure, soreness, itchiness, and fatigue for several days to weeks following surgery as the body recovers.
- **Sensory Changes in Skin:** You may feel reduced or heightened sensation in the affected areas which is normal. You can expect return of normal sensation after a few weeks to months.

DO NOT'S

- **Do NOT apply hydrogen peroxide to incision sites.** Keep postop dressings in place until follow-up.
- **DO NOT soak in baths, jacuzzies or hot tubs** until all incisions have fully healed.
- **DO NOT take Aspirin, Ibuprofen, Naproxen, or other blood thinners** until your surgeon advises you it is safe.
- **Do NOT apply heating pads or ice packs to the treated areas** unless otherwise instructed by your surgeon.

EMERGENCY SITUATIONS – WHEN TO CALL THE OFFICE (703-481-0002) OR GO TO THE HOSPITAL

- **Signs of Infection:** Spreading redness, worsening swelling, increased drainage or drainage of pus, worsening pain, warmth at incision site and temperature over 101 degrees Fahrenheit.
- **Excessive Bleeding:** If the dressings are saturated with bright red blood and you are having to make very frequent dressing changes.
- **Other Emergency Situations:** Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, chest pain, lightheadedness that does not quickly resolve, severe vomiting, pain, or asymmetric swelling in your legs.