



## *PRE AND POST BRACHIOPLASTY (ARM LIFT) GUIDE*

**PRE-SURGERY****POST-SURGERY**

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# Pre-Surgery Guidelines



## 2 weeks before surgery:

- Inform our staff of any medications or vitamins you are taking at least 2 weeks before your scheduled surgery date.
- Cease supplements 2 weeks prior to your surgery and refrain from using them until 2 weeks after surgery unless instructed otherwise by your GP, specialist, or surgeon.



## Inform your Surgeon if you are on any of the following:

- Multivitamins
- Vitamin E
- Supplements containing garlic, ginger, ginkgo biloba, evening primrose oil, fish oil, or omega-3 (e.g., krill oil)
- Nurofen or Nurofen Plus
- Aspirin, Plavix, Disprin, Apixiban, Riveroxiban, Aspro Clear, Ibuprofen or any other blood-thinning or anti-inflammatory medications (blood thinners and can cause bleeding)
- Ozempic or equivalent weight loss medication should be stopped 3 weeks prior to surgery and only clear fluids diet the day prior to surgery.



## Important Notice:

If you are on a blood-thinning medication, consult your GP and notify your surgeon's clinic before discontinuing its use. Taking any of the medications or vitamins listed above may increase your risk of bleeding and could necessitate the cancellation of your surgery.



## Smoking Cessation:

You must stop smoking and/or vaping at least 8 weeks prior and after surgery, or your procedure will be deferred, and fees may apply. Smoking cessation would be confirmed with a blood test prior to your procedure. For optimal healing, avoid smoking for as long as possible after surgery.



If you have any questions or concerns regarding this information, please contact our office.



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# Morning Of Surgery



## Showering:

On the morning of your surgery, please take a thorough hot shower and wash your hair. You will not be able to shower again until 24 hours after your surgery.



## Clothing:

Wear comfortable, loose-fitting clothing, such as a button-down shirt and slip-on flat shoes. Please avoid wearing lace or tight-fitting underwear. Do not wear perfume, contact lenses, or any jewellery on the day of surgery. Be sure to bring your glasses and their case.



## Transportation:

You must arrange for a family member or friend to drive you to and from the hospital, as the hospital will not allow you to leave on your own. This includes leaving by taxi, Uber, train, or bus. Additionally, someone must stay with you for the first 72 hours following surgery in case of any adverse reactions to the anaesthesia.



## Fasting:

You will need to fast before your surgery, which means following a restricted diet or not consuming anything (including water). Your anaesthetist will determine the exact fasting period and you will be contacted by phone the day before your surgery with the specific time to start fasting. Please note that fasting also includes avoiding gum, coffee, tea, or breath mints.



## Important Information for Day Surgery Patients:

If you are being admitted as a day case (no overnight stay required), keep the following in mind:

- The major effects of anaesthesia wear off quickly, but minor effects on memory, balance, and muscle function may persist for several hours. These effects vary by individual.
- You are not permitted to drive while taking pain medication.
- You must have access to a mobile phone.
- Avoid operating machinery or making important decisions for at least 72 hours after anaesthesia.



## Arrival:

Plan to arrive at the hospital 10 minutes early on the day of your surgery.



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# Post-Surgery Medications & Pain Management



We hope your recovery from surgery is going well. This plan is designed to help you manage postoperative pain. While some pain is inevitable after surgery, our goal is to make it as manageable as possible while minimising medication side effects. It is best to remain active to speed up your recovery. Your anaesthetist may give you a script for some or all of the following medications. These medications may not eliminate all pain but will help make you more comfortable. The discomfort will decrease over time as your body heals, with the pain typically being most intense in the first 24-48 hours and gradually improving thereafter. Staying active can also help distract you from the discomfort and speed up your recovery.



Please adhere to this plan closely for the best results. If you have allergies to any of the listed medications, do not take them without consulting your doctor.

| Paracetamol<br>(Panadol)                                                         | Ibuprofen<br>(Nurofen)                                                                     | Diazepam<br>(Valium)                                                                        | Tapentadol IR<br>(immediate<br>release)                    | Keflex<br>(Antibiotics)                                                   |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 500mg                                                                            | 200mg                                                                                      | 2mg                                                                                         | 50mg                                                       | 500mg                                                                     |
| Take 2 tablets<br>every 6 hours for<br>10 days. (No<br>prescription<br>required) | Take 2 tablets<br>every 8 hours with<br>food for 10 days.<br>(No prescription<br>required) | Take 1 tablet 3<br>times a day for 5<br>days. (If you feel<br>drowsy, reduce the<br>dosage) | Take 1 tablet only<br>when needed, up<br>to every 6 hours. | Take 1 tablet<br>every 6 hours for<br>10 days. (This is an<br>antibiotic) |

*Note: Due to strict prescription regulations, we cannot provide more medication than what is prescribed. If you need additional prescriptions, please follow up with your GP, as they will need to review your condition. It may be wise to schedule a GP appointment before your medication runs out.*



## Supplements for Wound Healing:

Vitamin C, Zinc, and Magnesium are after surgery as they may assist with wound healing. Please consult your GP or pharmacist for appropriate dosage recommendations.



## Emergency Contact:

In case of an emergency, please contact 000, or the Concord Hospital Switchboard at (02) 9767 5000 to reach the Plastics Registrar on call or go to the nearest Emergency Department. Please also email or call the rooms to inform us of your progress.



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# Post-Surgery Care Instructions:



## Sleeping:

Sleep on your back with your head and chest elevated for the first week to reduce swelling. Try to stay on your back for at least 2 weeks.



## Activity:

Gentle walking/lower body exercise for the first 2 weeks. Return to upper body exercise at 6 weeks.



## Bathing:

Take a sponge bath for the first 24 hours, then shower after that. Pat dressings dry and avoid submerging in water (baths, Jacuzzis) for 6 weeks.



## Dressings:

Your incisions will be covered with dressings, and supportive garments will reduce swelling and aid healing. If you have drainage tubes, they are typically removed before you go home. A diet rich in protein and vitamins helps healing.



## Compression Garment:

Wear post surgery garments for 6 weeks post surgery



## Ice Packs:

Apply ice packs off and on for the first 48 hours



## Skin Care:

Your arms will feel tight at first. Start moisturising the skin (avoid dressings) from day one.



## Sutures:

- Your sutures are self-dissolving. If any sutures poke out or cause irritation, please contact the office or see your GP to have them trimmed.



## Driving:

- Avoid driving for the first 2 weeks. You may resume once you can turn your head and brake comfortably.



## Postoperative Appointments:

- Your first follow-up will be with a nurse or doctor. You'll typically see your surgeon at 3, 6, and 12 months post-op.



## Other Recommendations:

- Avoid alcohol and smoking to promote optimal healing
- Avoid self-tanning for at least 6 weeks



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## Post-Surgery Mobility Exercises

It's important to gently stretch your chest and abdominal muscles after surgery, especially if you've been less mobile in the first few days. To do this safely and effectively, we recommend the following exercises:



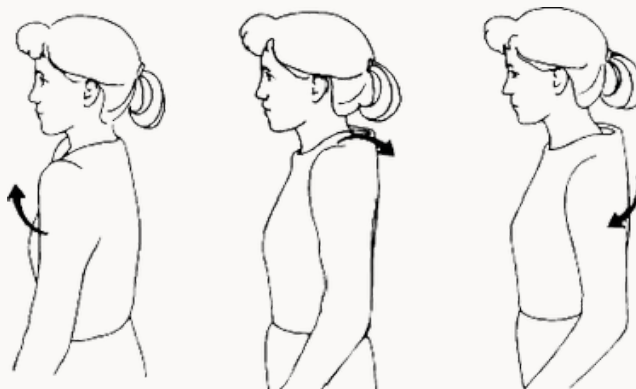
**Deep Breaths** - *This helps stretch your chest muscles by expanding your ribs and ensures your lungs fully expand after anaesthesia.*

- Take a deep breath, hold for 2-3 seconds.



**Shoulder Shrugs and Circles** - *These help stretch your chest and shoulders while relieving tension in your neck and shoulders.*

- Bring your shoulders forward, up, back, and down in a large circle. Start with smaller circles if you feel stiff, gradually increasing the size as you loosen up. Repeat 5 to 10 times.



These exercises can be repeated several times a day, starting on day 1 post-surgery, and will help you feel more mobile and speed up recovery by stretching your pec muscles.



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## What's Normal To Expect

1. **Swelling** - it is worth noting that around 6-8 weeks after surgery many patients will experience an increase in inflammation and swelling as the body goes through a healing process. This is a natural healing process that can't be sped up or avoided. Please note timing will vary from patient to patient.
2. **Swishy or Crackly Sounds Under the Skin** - It's normal to hear sounds or feel sensations of fluid or air under the skin after surgery. These will subside within the first week.
3. **Numbness and Sensitivity** - It is very common to experience numbness after surgery. You will find that sensation and feeling return over the coming weeks and months following surgery. This is particularly apparent in the skin around the incision.
4. **Discomfort** - Mild to moderate discomfort, especially when moving your arms or chest, is normal during the first week. This should be manageable with the prescribed pain relief. Sharp, sudden pain when stretching could be caused by tension on the stitches used to create the lower fold of the breast. Avoid big stretches for the first few months.
5. **Lumps on the Incision Line** - If you feel lumps along the incision, these are likely the internal self-dissolving stitches. They will dissolve within 9 months.
6. **Bloating and Water Retention** - Abdominal bloating and fluid retention are common after surgery and will subside as you begin moving around more.



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# Scar Management: Understanding and Caring for Your Scars

A scar is a natural part of the healing process that forms within 2 to 3 days after an injury. Scar tissue fills the wound and can develop over several weeks to months. Initially, scars are red and 'immature'. Over 3 months to 2 years, they typically become paler, flatter, and softer. Regular massage and moisturising help this process.

Monitor your scars closely and contact your doctor if any issues arise.

**Identifying Problematic Scars:** Signs of problematic scars include:

- Persistent redness or purple coloration
- Raised, hard texture
- Itchiness
- Restricted movement

These could be hypertrophic or keloid scars. Higher-risk individuals include those with certain skin types or a history of problematic scarring.

**What to Do if Your Scar Becomes a Problem:** Contact your doctor if you notice any issues with your scar. Treatments such as taping, silicone gel, pressure therapy, or splinting may be recommended. Early intervention is crucial.

## Massage & Moisturizing

- **When to Start:** Begin massaging your scar 3-4 weeks post-op, once the wound has healed. Continue until the scar matures, typically 12-18 months.
- **How to Massage:** Use a gentle, circular motion with firm pressure. Massage 2-3 times a day for 5-10 minutes each time.
- **Do Not Massage:** Avoid massaging open wounds or if the scar becomes sore, blisters, reopens, or a rash develops.

## Silicone Gel and Sheets

- **Silicone Gel:** Apply silicone gel (e.g., Strataderm) to the scar every 12 hours.
- **Silicone Gel Sheets:** Cut to fit, apply to a clean, dry scar, and hold in place with tape or a splint. Wash the sheet daily and store it properly. Avoid use on open wounds or if a rash develops.

## Adhesive Tape

- **Purpose:** Gentle pressure from adhesive tape helps prevent thick, raised scars.
- **Usage:** Apply to clean, dry skin and follow your doctor's instructions on changing frequency. Use vegetable oil to ease removal if needed.

**Sunscreen Protection** Scars take at least a year to fade. Protect them from sunlight using SPF 30+ sunscreen, even through a bathing suit. Be extra cautious if the skin has reduced sensitivity. For any concerns or questions, please contact your doctor.



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*Thank you* for diligently following these post-operative guidelines. Your commitment to proper scar care and recovery will greatly contribute to achieving the best possible results.

If you have any questions or need further assistance, please don't hesitate to reach out. Your health and satisfaction are our top priorities.

*YOUR BEAUTY, OUR EXPERTISE.*

