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## **Arm Lift (Brachioplasty)**

### Patient Information Handout

#### **Arm Lift**

An arm lift or brachioplasty is used to target excess skin and fat between the axilla (armpit) and the elbow. This is usually done with a combination of liposuction and excision of redundant skin. It is important not to over tighten the upper arm as doing so leads to an unnatural look. Whilst scars are inevitable, Mr. Bunker aims to minimise scarring through meticulous surgical technique and careful placement.

#### **What Will It Do?**

An arm lift is designed to tighten the skin and improve the contour of the upper arms. The procedure tightens and smooths the underlying supportive tissue that defines the shape of the upper arm whilst reducing localised pockets of fat.



#### **Is it Right for Me?**

Arm lift surgery is an individualised procedure and may not be suitable for everyone. At your consult, Mr. Bunker will discuss your goals and expectations and perform a targeted examination prior to discussing a surgical plan if appropriate.

Arm lift surgery may be a good option for you if:

- You have realistic expectations
- Your weight is relatively stable
- You have excess soft tissue along the upper arm
- You are physically healthy and do not have not have medical conditions that impair healing or increase the risk of surgery
- You are a non-smoker or have stopped smoking at least 3 months ago

#### **Will I need Anaesthesia?**

Mr. Bunker performs arm lift under general anaesthesia to maximise patient comfort. Modern anaesthetics are safe and effective but carry some risks, which you will discuss with your anaesthetist.

#### **Will I need to stay in Hospital?**

Usually you will stay in the hospital one night after an isolated arm lift. This is to ensure there are no unexpected early complications such as bleeding and that your pain is well controlled prior to discharge.

## **What are the Risks and Complications?**

All surgery has risks. There are general risks which apply to all operations as well as specific risks for individual procedures. General risks and complications of surgery may include:

- Bleeding
- Infection that may require treatment with antibiotics or further surgery in some cases
- Allergic reaction (to sutures, dressings or antiseptic solutions)
- Pain, bruising and swelling around the operated sites
- Short-term nausea following general anaesthesia and other risks related to anaesthesia

Specific risks and complications associated with arm lift surgery include:

- Prominent scars such as keloids and hypertrophic scars which may be red, raised and/or itchy.
- Numbness around operated sites. This is usually temporary but can be permanent.
- Wound breakdown or poor healing leading to delaying healing or requiring skin grafts for closure.
- Restrictive movement due over-tightened skin
- Accumulation of fluid (seroma) or blood (haematoma) under the skin which may require a procedure to remove.
- Fat that has a poor blood supply may cause discharge from the surgical wounds or palpable lumps.

## **Where will the Surgery take place?**

Your surgery will take place in an accredited hospital facility.

## **What do I need to do Before Surgery?**

- Due to the recent cosmetic surgery reforms, all patients in Australia undergoing cosmetic surgery are required to undertake a Body Dysmorphic Disorder Questionnaire.
- You will be asked to complete a full medical history. You must list all medications you take including dietary supplements such as fish oil which increase your risk of bleeding.
- Check with your surgeon about your medications as some may need to be stopped. Any additional tests required preoperatively will be arranged by Mr. Bunker or your anaesthetist.
- If you decide to have arm lift surgery, you will need to sign a consent form. Make sure you read the consent form carefully before signing. If you have any questions, please ask them prior to surgery.
- Avoid any strenuous activity or exercise in the week before your surgery
- Make sure you arrange for a relative or friend to drive you to and from the hospital or clinic and that you have arranged appropriate help at home including someone to stay with you for the first 24 hours. Think about the setup at home where you will recover – you may want extra pillows, fluids and a toilet nearby and it is useful to have a telephone within reach.
- Consider work arrangements. Most patients will remain off work for approximately 4 weeks after surgery. A medical certificate can be supplied to your preoperatively if required
- Take Vitamin C supplements 1gram a daily starting at least 2 weeks before your surgery, unless you are allergic or unable to tolerate
- You will not be able to use you arms for heavy lifting for 6 weeks.
- You will receive detailed preoperative and postoperative instructions. Follow them carefully.

### **What do I need to do After Surgery?**

- Arrange for a relative or friend to drive you home after the surgery. Someone should also stay with you for at least the first day after the operation and preferably for a few days.
- You can usually drink fluids and eat a light meal two or three hours after surgery. You may have some pain and discomfort, particularly around the incisions. You will receive medications for home (usually pain relief and antibiotics) as well as detailed postoperative instructions which include how to care for your surgical site, signs which warrant concern, contact information and follow-up instructions.
- In some cases a small, thin tube may be temporarily placed under the skin to drain any excess blood or fluid that may collect. This is usually removed in the office at your post-operative appointment.
- Some bruising and swelling is normal and may take up to a few weeks to disappear.
- Dressings are to remain dry and intact until your postoperative review.
- Follow any instructions for postoperative garment wear if instructed.

If you experience any of the following symptoms, notify us immediately:

- Temperature higher than 38°C or chills
- Heavy bleeding from the incisions
- Worsening redness around the incision sites
- Increasing pain or tenderness, or other problems that appear to be worsening
- Issues with the dressings (becoming dirty, wet or loose)

### **Will I have Scarring?**

Some visible scars are inevitable. However, efforts will be made to limit the length of your scars and to place them in as inconspicuous a position as possible. Mr. Bunker will discuss the placement of scars with you prior to surgery. In cases where you have significant skin laxity, the scars may extend into the axilla (armpit) or below the elbow. Scars may be more noticeable than you anticipated. It is important that you have realistic expectations of the surgery and that you discuss potential outcomes with your surgeon. Keep in mind most scars fade with time.

### **Will I need Revisional Surgery?**

Revisional surgery may be necessary to correct minor irregularities. Often these can be performed under local anaesthetic in the rooms and do not require general anaesthesia or hospital admission.

### **How much does Brachioplasty Cost?**

Cost is always a consideration in elective surgery and may include:

- Surgical fee
- Hospital or surgical facility costs
- Anaesthesia fees
- Prescriptions for medication
- Postsurgery garments
- Medical tests
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A quote for the surgical fee is provided to you prior to surgery. This also contains instructions on how to obtain quotes for associated fees as listed above. If you have any queries, please contact the Practice Manager.

### Terms You Should Know:

- **General anaesthesia:** Drugs and/or gases used during an operation to relieve pain and alter consciousness. When you are under general anaesthesia you are 'asleep'.
- **Local anaesthesia:** A drug injected directly to the site of an incision during an operation to relieve pain. Also referred to as 'numbed with needles'.
- **Arm lift:** A surgical procedure (also known as brachioplasty) to correct sagging of the upper arms.
- **Axilla:** The armpit.
- **Brachioplasty:** A surgical procedure, also known as an arm lift, to correct sagging of the upper arms.
- **Haematoma:** A blood collection beneath the skin
- **Liposuction:** Also called lipoplasty or suction lipectomy, this procedure removes fat from beneath the skin surface to reduce fullness.
- **Skin laxity:** Degree of loose skin.



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