

Brachioplasty

Arm Reduction Surgery | Patient Information

What is brachioplasty (arm reduction surgery)?

As we age and/or lose weight, the skin on the upper arms can become loose and saggy. This skin, often referred to as 'bingo wings', can become a problem for many people; particularly as redundant pockets of fat can be difficult to reduce with exercise and dieting alone. During the brachioplasty procedure, excess skin and fat are removed from the underside of the upper arm to improve contour.

Is the procedure right for me?

A detailed consultation with your consultant plastic surgeon is essential prior to undergoing any surgical procedure. During the consultation, your surgeon will discuss your area/s of concern, desired improvements, options available (including no treatment at all) and expected outcomes. Your surgeon will examine you and may take some photographs for your medical records. They will ask you if you want to have someone with you during the examination and ask you to sign a consent form for taking, storing and using the photographs. The surgeon will measure your height and weight to make sure that it is safe to do an operation. If you are overweight, or planning to become pregnant, your surgeon may suggest delaying your operation. If you decide to proceed with surgery, you will be given a 'cooling-off' period of at least 2 weeks between initial consultation and the date of your operation to ensure you have ample time to reflect on all aspects of the procedure before proceeding (although please bear in mind the waiting lists for our surgeons mean this period is invariably significantly longer).

How is the procedure carried out?

Should brachioplasty be agreed upon as the most suitable treatment, the procedure will be carried out by your surgeon in our CQC approved operating theatre. The areas causing concern are carefully marked to ensure accurate scar position and the achievement of adequate correction. After the administration of the anaesthetic, liposuction is used to free up the skin whilst maintaining the important lymphatic drainage system. Skin is then removed to ensure an improved contour and is carefully closed using dissolving stitches underneath the skin. Dressings are then applied, and you are fitted with a comfortable compression garment. The surgery is usually performed as a day case under a local, general or twilight anaesthesia. Our highly experienced medical team will be on hand during your stay to care for your needs.

Recovery and aftercare

Following brachioplasty, patients can expect considerable bruising and swelling which will be uncomfortable and at times, painful. You are likely to need simple pain killers for the first days after the operation. It is usual to take around 5-7 days off work to aid recovery. Showering is permitted on the second post-operative day. The provided snug pressure garment must be worn to reduce swelling but may be taken off to quickly shower and replaced thereafter. Depending on your individual post-operative recovery, your surgeon will advise on when is acceptable to resume exercise.

Risks and Complications

All surgical procedures are associated with risks. Your surgeon will explain these in detail during initial consultation, enabling you to reach an informed decision on whether you wish to proceed. Serious complications are uncommon, however patients should be aware of the following complications prior to undergoing brachioplasty-

- Unpredictable/poor scarring of skin
- Anaesthesia risks
- Bleeding
- Infection
- Fluid accumulation (seroma)
- Pain, which may persist
- Possibility of revisional surgery

Results

The results of brachioplasty are not immediately visible; as swelling can take a long time to settle you may not see the full benefit of the operation for up to three months. Over time, post-surgical swelling will subside and incision lines will fade. Satisfaction with your new image should continue to grow as you fully recover from surgery. In order to achieve optimal results it is important that you follow your surgeon's post-operative instructions and follow-up visits.

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Cost

Prices for brachioplasty can vary. Costs may include-

- Anaesthesia fees
- Hospital or surgical facility costs
- Medical tests
- Post-surgery garments
- Surgeon's fee

After consultation and if you are planning to proceed with surgery, you will be given a written quotation regarding the cost of the planned procedure.

Alternative treatments

Brachioplasty is an elective operation. Alternative forms of management consist of not treating the areas of loose skin and fatty deposits. Suction-assisted liposuction surgery or ultrasound VASER liposuction surgery may offer surgical alternatives to arm reduction surgery if there is good skin tone and localised fatty deposits in an individual of normal weight. Renuvion skin tightening may offer further improvement. CoolSculpting fat freezing (cryolipolysis) is a non-surgical procedure which may also offer some benefit in terms of targeted fat removal. Diet and exercise regimes may also be of benefit in the overall reduction of excess body fat and contour improvement. Risks and potential complications are also associated with alternative surgical forms of treatment.

If you experience any problems or have concerns following surgery, please do not hesitate to call our direct patient line for assistance on 07908 891059.

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Pre-Operative Preparations

6 week period before surgery-

Patients requiring twilight or general anaesthesia should not travel long haul for the 6 week period before and 6 week period after surgery.

4 weeks before surgery-

Stop taking the contraceptive pill and HRT 4 weeks before surgery if this has been advised by your Surgeon or anaesthetist.

2 weeks before surgery-

We would recommend that you start taking Arnica anti-bruising tablets, three times a day, two weeks prior to and two weeks after surgery. These are available from several health and wellbeing stores, including Holland & Barratt.

1 week before surgery-

Avoid Aspirin, Ibuprofen, Nurofen and other similar painkillers one week before and two weeks after surgery. Paracetamol is the safest painkiller to take, if necessary.

Stop taking Vitamin E and its compounds (such as evening primrose oil, fish oils, garlic and garlic capsules) one week before surgery and two weeks after surgery. Taking Vitamin E in any form can cause bleeding and post-operative complications.

1 day before and on the day of surgery-

Shower all over (including your hair and face) with Hibiscrub antiseptic liquid soap (provided on prescription from Coppergate Clinic) the day before and morning of your surgery before coming into the clinic. Do not apply moisturiser after showering.

Day of surgery-

You must avoid eating solid food and milky drinks for 6 hours prior to your appointment for sedation. Water, clear drinks, black tea and black coffee can be consumed for up to 2 hours before your sedation/general anaesthetic.

You must take your routine medicines at the usual time, unless advised otherwise and bring them with you (including inhalers).

At least one nail must be free from acrylic or nail polish nails as a monitor will be placed on a finger.

Post-Operative Instructions

Average length of stay-

The surgery will be performed as a day case under a general anaesthetic or twilight anaesthesia unless your Surgeon advised otherwise during consultation.

If you live further than a 1 hour drive from the clinic, it is mandatory to stay in the vicinity until the following day.

6 week period after surgery-

Patients requiring twilight or general anaesthesia should not travel long haul for the 6 week period before and 6 week period after surgery.

0-2 weeks after surgery

- Minimise activity and to rest as much as possible
- Wear the provided compression garment day and night, except for when showering
- Shower if you wish, but please be as quick as possible and do not linger. Dressings should be gently patted dry before the compression garment is put back on. At your follow up appointment, your surgeon will guide you on when leisurely showers and baths may resume
- Take Paracetamol as required (avoid aspirin, ibuprofen, nurofen and similar painkillers)

0-2 weeks after surgery

- Tape should not be removed and replaced until it is very loose and almost falling off. Frequent removal and replacement of tape may irritate the scar.

2 weeks after surgery

- Gentle activity may resume (for example driving) but do listen to your body- it will tell you if you are overdoing things. Depending on your individual post-operative recovery, your surgeon will advise on when is acceptable to resume exercise.
- Your surgeon will advise regarding the most appropriate scar management specific to your skin type and surgery.

2-4 weeks after surgery

- Wear the provided compression garment during the day

3 weeks after surgery onwards

- Scars and surrounding skin can be moisturised daily

6-12 weeks after surgery

- Swimming and more strenuous exercise may resume, as advised by your surgeon at your follow up appointment

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