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ARM LIFT (BRAQUIOPLASTY) – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Brachioplasty, or an arm lift, is a surgical procedure designed to correct laxity on the inner arms by removing excess skin and, in some cases, fat. It is particularly suitable when the skin has lost elasticity due to ageing, significant weight loss or genetic factors, and when exercise or non-surgical treatments are no longer sufficient to improve the contour.

Before surgery, we carry out an individualised assessment in which I assess the amount of excess skin, the quality of the tissues, the presence of localised fat and your expectations. Depending on these factors, there are **two main techniques.**

Brachioplasty with a scar along the inner arm is the most comprehensive technique and the one most commonly used when there is moderate or severe skin laxity. The incision extends from the armpit towards the elbow, following the inner aspect of the arm. This allows a greater amount of skin to be removed and achieves a firmer, more defined result. The scar is permanent and visible when you raise your arms. I will always discuss this very clearly with you before surgery, as it involves a trade-off between shape and scarring. Over time, and with appropriate care, its appearance will usually improve, although it will not disappear.

Brachioplasty with a scar limited to the armpit is only suitable in carefully selected cases, when the skin laxity is mild and mainly concentrated around the armpit. The scar is hidden within the natural fold of the armpit, making it less visible, but its corrective capacity is limited. It is not suitable when there is significant excess skin along the arm, as it would not allow a satisfactory result.

The surgery is performed in an operating theatre, usually under **general anaesthetic**, although in specific cases it can be performed under local anaesthetic with sedation. During the procedure, the excess skin is removed and, if necessary, liposuction is performed at the same time to improve the contour. At the end of the procedure, the incisions are carefully closed and, in some cases, temporary drains are placed. Following surgery, you will wear a compression garment, which is essential for controlling swelling and promoting good wound healing.

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As with any surgical procedure, there are **risks and potential complications.** Most patients do not experience these, but it is important that you are aware of them:

- **Skin scarring:** all surgery leaves scars. Although good wound healing is usual, abnormal scars may develop that are more visible, asymmetrical, a different colour from the surrounding skin or marked by the sutures. In some cases, they may require specific treatment or surgical revision. People with poor blood supply to the area, previous surgery, radiotherapy or who smoke have a higher risk of poor wound healing and skin loss. For this reason, it is essential to stop smoking at least 4–6 weeks before surgery and for a minimum of 4 weeks afterwards.
- **Changes in the position or appearance of the scar over time:** even when the surgical technique is correct, scars may descend or become more visible over the course of several months.
- **Wound opening or delayed wound healing:** some areas may take longer to heal or may not heal properly, potentially requiring prolonged wound care or additional surgery.
- **Depressions, irregularities or skin puckering:** visible or palpable irregularities may develop in the contour of the arm.
- **Bleeding or haematoma:** bleeding may occur during or after surgery. In uncommon cases, it may be necessary to drain the accumulated blood or provide urgent treatment. Aspirin, anti-inflammatory medication, herbal supplements and certain medicines can increase this risk.
- **Infection:** infection is uncommon, but if it occurs, antibiotics or additional surgery may be required. In exceptional cases, a severe soft-tissue infection (necrotising fasciitis) may develop. This is a life-threatening emergency requiring immediate medical attention.
- **Seroma:** an accumulation of fluid beneath the skin, which may require additional drainage.
- **Changes in skin sensation:** reduced or complete loss of sensation may occur in the treated area and, in some cases, sensation may not fully return.
- **Asymmetry:** perfect symmetry between both arms may not be achieved due to natural differences in anatomy or differences in healing.
- **Distal oedema:** swelling may occur in the arms or, more generally, in the limbs. This usually improves with compression garments and specific measures.

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- **Pain:** chronic pain is uncommon, but may occur as a result of nerve entrapment within scar tissue.
- **Pulmonary complications and thrombosis:** in rare cases, blood clots or respiratory complications may occur following general anaesthesia, some of which can be potentially serious.
- **Risks related to anaesthesia:** both general and local anaesthesia carry uncommon but possible risks.
- **Unsatisfactory aesthetic result:** there is a possibility that the result may not fully meet your expectations and additional surgery may be required.
- **Influence of pre-existing medical conditions:** certain health conditions may increase the risk of complications or require specific medication to prevent infections or thrombosis.
- **Smoking and nicotine:** smoking or using nicotine-containing products significantly increases the risk of skin necrosis, delayed wound healing and surgical complications.

Recovery is gradual and requires your cooperation. It is essential to follow the medical instructions, avoid strenuous activities involving your arms, wear your compression garment and attend all follow-up appointments. The final result is assessed after several months, once the swelling has subsided and the scars have matured.

My aim is to ensure that you have all the information you need to make a calm, informed and realistic decision. Brachioplasty can significantly improve the shape of the arms and your quality of life, provided it is performed for an appropriate indication and with proper follow-up care. If you wish, I would be delighted to assess your case on an individual basis and answer any questions you may have.

Remember

If you have any questions or need assistance, the medical and nursing team is here to support you and answer any questions you may have. Your recovery is a process that we go through together, so that you can feel comfortable and confident in your body again.

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Kind regards,



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