

## Brachioplasty Complication Checklist

Please read Ms Nugent's Brachioplasty information leaflet and the other information leaflets that you have received in full. Then please read through and initial beside each point in the complication checklist for your procedure below to indicate that you are aware of and understand each potential risk or complication. Once completed and any questions answered, please sign and date at the end of the last page.

### IMPORTANT:

Ms Nugent must receive this completed paperwork **prior to your date of surgery**.

### Early complications (within the first week of surgery)

#### Bleeding (haematoma)

It is normal to have some mild oozing from the surgical wounds for a few days following a brachioplasty. If there is any suggestion that excessive bleeding after brachioplasty surgery has occurred, you may need to go back to the operating theatre to have the bleeding stopped and the wound washed out to evacuate the collected blood.

Patient initials .....

#### Infection

Rates of severe infection in brachioplasty are low. Minor wound infections or inflammation may occur - if it does happen, an infection will be treated with antibiotics. Rarely, a return to the operating theatre to wash out the wound might be required.

Patient initials .....

#### Blood clots

Blood clots in the veins of the legs (DVT - deep venous thrombosis) are rare after brachioplasty surgery. Preventative measures are taken (such as calf compression stockings) if you are having a general anaesthetic. If a DVT does develop, you will need various investigations and treatment as appropriate. The risk can be reduced further by drinking plenty of water postoperatively and gently mobilising. A pulmonary embolus (PE) describes a blood clot that has broken off from the DVT and lodged in the blood vessels in the lungs. This can be serious (at times, fatal), and again, appropriate investigations and treatment are instigated should this be suspected after your operation.

Patient initials .....

#### Seroma

After surgery, the body naturally produces a certain amount of fluid as part of its reaction to surgery and attempts to heal the area. Sometimes this fluid can build up underneath the skin after the drains have been removed and require drainage in the clinic with a fine needle. This may need to be repeated until it stops being produced.

Patient initials .....

### Intermediate complications (within 6 weeks of surgery)

#### Delayed wound healing

In some people the wounds take longer to heal than in others: this may be due to having had a mild infection of the wound, due to a reaction with the stitches or from "overdoing it" straight after surgery. Normally this is a minor inconvenience, which can be managed with observation or special dressings as an outpatient. Occasionally it can lead to a troublesome infection developing as described above.

Patient initials .....

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**Wound dehiscence**

Occasionally some of the wound can open or gape. This is normally only a very small area and can be managed by observation and wound care. It usually does not leave any lasting problems. Rarely, the wound may need to be resutured or the scar revised.

Patient initials .....

**Persistent swelling**

Swelling to the arms is normal after a brachioplasty operation. Most of the swelling usually resolves during the first 6 weeks after surgery. In some cases it can be more severe and persist longer than usual.

Patient initials .....

**Asymmetries and irregularities**

While no-one is perfectly symmetrical, and no two arms are 100% symmetrical, every effort will be made to achieve good symmetry after your surgery. However, there will inevitably be subtle differences between each side. Occasionally there are significant asymmetries and irregularities that need to be addressed with further surgery (a revision operation).

Patient initials .....

**Numbness or hypersensitivity**

The upper arm and forearm skin may be numb or over sensitive in the aftermath of surgery. The feeling will usually normalise eventually, but can take several weeks or even months in some cases. Rarely the abnormal sensation is permanent.

Patient initials .....

**Weakness of arm or shoulder movement**

Very rarely, you may have weakness of shoulder or arm movement after brachioplasty surgery. This is due to stretching or irritation or bruising of nearby nerves. This is extremely rare but normally temporary only requiring time to recover. If recovery was unexpectedly prolonged, further tests examining the nerves affected would need to be performed to see if treatment was necessary.

Patient initials .....

**Tightness of the arm**

It is common to feel some degree of tightness in your arm after brachioplasty surgery as the tissue has been tightened and there will be some swelling in the early stages. This usually settles quickly without needing any treatment other than ensuring that swelling is properly managed. Occasionally it is more unpleasant and lasts longer.

Patient initials .....

**Skin loss (necrosis)**

Rarely loss of some of the skin that has been lifted or tightened during the brachioplasty surgery occurs. If this occurs, it is usually due to problems with the blood supply to the skin or infection. Should you be unlucky enough to have this happen to you, it may mean dressings and wound care for a longer than usual period of time or in more severe cases further surgery. This may result in a poorer scar than usual. The risk of this problem is significantly increased in smokers, so you are always advised to stop smoking in advance of any planned brachioplasty surgery and during the recovery period.

Patient initials .....

## Late complications (more than 6 weeks from surgery)

### Poor scar formation

Scarring will occur whenever the skin is cut and of course, every effort is made to place scar lines where they will heal well and be least visible. Scar maturation varies from person to person and occurs over 12 - 18 months, with scars passing through a red, itchy and lumpy phase, prior to settling down to thinner, softer less distinct lines. Normally the scars from brachioplasty surgery heal well but occasionally, they may tend to thicken and may require steroid injections to help them settle down or stretch. In some cases, minor surgical scar revisional surgery may be needed. Hypertrophic or keloid scars can occasionally occur – these are thickened and lumpy scars that are more common in people of Asian or Afro-Caribbean descent. The scar usually sits inconspicuously on the inner arm but sometimes can be pulled to one side or the other in areas due to differences in tissue elasticity, tension or scarring. The scar can be tight under the arm in the beginning especially if the surgery was extended to include the under arm and/or upper outer chest area. This usually softens with time and scar management but occasionally will need to be surgically released. Small asymmetries in scar level or thickness have to be accepted as part of the normal healing process.

Patient initials .....

### Visible scarring

While every effort is made to place the brachioplasty scar in as inconspicuous a location on the inner arm as possible, the scar will usually run the length of the inner upper arm and may be visible from certain angles and in certain styles of clothing.

Patient initials .....

### Suboptimal contour

Occasionally there is a bulge of tissue at the elbow just below the operated area resulting in a visible “cut-off” point between the reshaped upper arm and the unoperated forearm. When liposuction is performed in addition to open brachioplasty surgery, occasionally small irregularities in contour can form in the arm skin.

Patient initials .....

### Lymphoedema

This is where persistent swelling of the arm occurs due to disruption of fluid drainage channels in the arm by the surgery. It is rare following brachioplasty surgery but occasionally may happen. Further treatment may be required to manage this if it should occur.

Patient initials .....

### Recurrence of loose skin

As your recovery takes place, your arm tissues gradually soften. This is a normal part of recovery. In some situations, a degree of recurrence of loose skin may occur. This is more likely in thin or very stretched skin with poor tone or when surgery has taken place after significant weight loss. The skin tone in stretched skin such as skin with stretch marks is low and can result in a degree of loose skin or irregularities in the areas where the stretch marks remain.

Patient initials .....

### Chronic pain

Occasionally patients suffer from chronic pain after brachioplasty surgery. This is not always predictable or easily treated. It is more likely to occur if you suffer from severe or complex pain prior to your surgery. Further surgery or referral to a pain specialist may be indicated in this situation although it must be appreciated that there is not always a surgical solution to chronic pain.

Patient initials .....

### **The sub-optimal result**

Despite performing the operation as accurately and carefully as possible, some people will feel that their result is not exactly as they were hoping it would be. This may be due to one of the problems described above occurring or due to unrealistic expectations of the surgery e.g. mild asymmetries, visible scarring or less than expected definition of the arm area. It is important that you discuss your expectations in advance of the surgery so that you can understand what to expect from the surgery. Should you be left with a sub-optimal result, this will be discussed with you along with the subsequent appropriate treatment options. Treatment may include revision surgery. These additional operations will incur a further cost in most situations. Examples of further surgery include: scar revision, removal of more tissue and liposuction. An understanding of what is realistically achievable in your particular case is essential prior to undergoing surgery.

Patient initials .....

### **Other points about brachioplasty surgery**

#### **Ageing**

The natural ageing process of the body continues regardless of surgery and so may over time alter your body shape leading to recurrence of loose skin.

Patient initials .....

#### **Maintenance of results**

Maintaining a steady weight and a healthy weight for your body type and height as well as good core muscle strength and tone will help you get the best result possible from your brachioplasty surgery. While you will be restricted in the type and extent of activity that you can do during the recovery period, once recovered these restrictions will be lifted. Taking regular exercise will maintain a better body contour.

Patient initials .....

#### **Significant changes in weight**

With any significant gain or loss of weight, your body will gain or lose weight as it would normally do. This will change the size and shape of your body as would have happened before your surgery. Significant changes in weight after brachioplasty surgery can undo or alter the effects of the surgery.

Patient initials.....

#### **Limitations of results**

While brachioplasty surgery is very good at removing excess skin and improving the shape and contour of arm, there are some limitations to the results that can be achieved. If you are overweight, have significant excess tissue in your under arm/outer chest area or have had significant previous surgery, the end result may not be as good or as contoured an appearance as that in a very slim patient with no complicating factors. A longer scar may also be needed to perform the surgery. Individual body shape also impacts on the end result. Different body shapes will get different results with brachioplasty surgery. It is particularly important to understand this when looking at before and after photographs of patients who have undergone brachioplasty surgery.

Patient initials .....

## COVID-19 measures

As well as the standard process to ensure you are ready for treatment and to plan treatment, there are likely to be additional requirements due to COVID-19. You will need to undertake a COVID-19 screening questionnaire and follow the safety measures and protocols that are in place in the clinic and hospitals. Other measures that may be considered in some situations are a COVID-19 test, self-isolation in advance of treatment and during the early recovery period. You must also consider the risk of contracting COVID-19 around the time of your treatment and how this might affect you. Contracting COVID-19 during or after a time you have undergone a general anaesthetic or significant surgery may lead to a worse or more protracted course of illness than if you had not undergone the surgery.

Patient initials .....

**I acknowledge that I have read and understood the nature of a brachioplasty operation. I have read the information leaflet provided to me and I understand the potential risks and complications associated with this procedure.**

**I agree to follow the postoperative care instructions given to me, including attendance at the postoperative follow up appointments, compliance with instructions to stop smoking/nicotine products (when relevant) and cessation of exercise and heavy lifting during the recovery after surgery.**

**I agree to communicate any concerns I may have in a timely manner and to inform Ms Nugent of any changes in my health or circumstances that may affect my suitability for, or recovery from brachioplasty surgery.**

**I understand that the administration of an anaesthetic (general and/or local) will be needed and consent to this. I understand that all forms of anaesthetic involve risk and the possibility of complications.**

**Occasionally during surgery, unexpected events can occur or there are unexpected findings which affect or prevent performing the planned surgery or require adjusting of the surgical plan or procedure. Should this happen, Ms Nugent and/or the operating room team will carry out any emergency treatment required and will adhere as much as possible to the planned surgery if safe to do so. If this should occur, you will be informed of this, any consequences of this and if any further treatment or assessment is required at the earliest opportunity.**

**I acknowledge that no guarantee has been given to me as to the result that may be obtained or maintained. I understand this will depend on several factors including but not limited to my pre-existing health, my body weight, skin and tissue type, the procedure chosen and performed, how my body heals during the recovery period, my lifestyle and if a complication occurs.**

**I agree that the procedure(s), recovery, after care, expected results, potential risks and complications and alternative treatments have been explained to me in a way that I understand.**

**I understand that I have the option of not undertaking any surgery at all.**

Patient signature ..... Date .....

Patient name .....

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