

# Elevate Plastic Surgery

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## Brachioplasty (Arm Lift)

### What is an Arm Lift?

An arm lift, or brachioplasty, is a surgical procedure that reduces excess sagging skin, tightens the underlying supportive tissue, and reduces fat in the upper arm. Fluctuations in weight, natural aging, and your own genetics can cause your upper arms to have a loose appearance that cannot be corrected through exercise alone.

Brachioplasty removes excess skin and fatty tissue from the upper arms. It is not a surgical treatment for being overweight; it is best suited for patients who have more excess skin than fat. The procedure is performed under general anesthesia, typically as an outpatient procedure. It can also be combined with other forms of body contouring surgery, such as suction-assisted lipectomy.

### Candidacy & Alternative Treatments

Arm lift surgery is an entirely elective procedure. You may be a good candidate if you:

- Are an adult with significant upper arm skin laxity.
- Have a relatively stable weight and are not significantly overweight.
- Are a healthy individual without medical conditions that impair healing.
- Are a nonsmoker.
- Have a positive outlook and realistic expectations.

**Alternative Treatments:** If there is good skin tone, suction-assisted lipectomy (liposuction) may be a surgical alternative, but the excess skin will remain.

### Consultation & Preparation

During your consultation, be prepared to discuss your surgical goals, medical conditions, drug allergies, previous surgeries, and current use of medications, vitamins, alcohol, or tobacco. Your surgeon will evaluate your general health, take photographs, and discuss your options and the likely outcomes of surgery.

Pre-Operative Preparation:

- You may be asked to get lab testing or a medical evaluation.
- Stop smoking completely.
- Avoid taking any aspirin or anti-inflammatory medications for 2 weeks before or after surgery, as this may increase the risk of bleeding. Non-prescription herbs and dietary supplements can also increase the risk of surgical bleeding, so please make sure Dr. Mahoney or Dr. Yeung has a full list of your medications and supplements.

- Arrange for someone to drive you to and from the accredited surgical facility or hospital, and to stay with you for at least the first night.

## The Procedure

1. **Anesthesia:** Medications are administered for your comfort. The procedure is performed under general anesthesia.
2. **Incisions:** Incisions are generally placed on the inside or back of the arm, extending from the underarm to just above the elbow. Underlying supportive tissue is tightened and reshaped. Your incisions will be closed with sutures. Most surgical techniques use deep and absorbable sutures.
3. **Immediate Results:** The smoother, tighter contours are apparent almost immediately, though they will be initially obscured by swelling and bruising.

## Post-Operative Care & Recovery

Dressings or bandages will be applied to your incisions, and your arms will be wrapped in an elastic bandage or compression garment. A small tube may be temporarily placed to drain fluid.

- You will be given specific instructions on how to care for the surgical site, handle drains, and take medications.
- Protective dressings and drains should not be removed unless instructed.
- It is important to follow post-operative instructions and limit strenuous activity for the instructed time.
- Ensure surgical incisions are not subject to excess force, swelling, abrasion, or motion during healing.

**Expected Results:** The results of arm lift surgery will be long-lasting provided you maintain a stable weight. However, brachioplasty does not stop the aging process or produce permanent tightening of the arm.

## Risks & Complications

Every surgical procedure involves a certain amount of risk, and an individual's choice to undergo surgery is based on comparing the risks to the potential benefits. Risks include:

- **Early/Temporary Complications:** Bruising, pain, numbness, swelling, lumps or contour irregularities, skin 'gathering', delayed healing, and a temporary sensation of arm tightness.
- **Scarring & Aesthetics:** All surgery leaves scars that are permanent but fade over time. Scars may be asymmetric, differently colored, or abnormally thick. Skin contour irregularities ("dog-ears") and natural body asymmetry can occur.
- **Sensation & Skin Changes:** You will have numbness in the upper arm, and diminished sensation can rarely be permanent. Skin discoloration, swelling, and increased skin sensitivity (itchiness, tenderness to temperatures) may occur.
- **Bleeding & Fluid:** Bleeding or fluid accumulation (seroma) under the skin may occur and require emergency treatment or drainage.
- **Healing Issues & Tissue Necrosis:** Wound disruption, major wound separation, or tissue necrosis (skin dying) may occur and require further surgery. Smokers have a greater risk of skin loss and healing complications. Fatty tissue deep in the skin may die (fat necrosis), producing firmness or lumps.

- **Deep Structures & Systemic Risks:** Potential injury to deeper structures like nerves, blood vessels, and muscles can occur. There is a risk of blood clots in the legs or lungs, cardiac complications, and risks associated with surgical anesthesia.
- **Other Concerns:** Sutures may spontaneously poke through the skin and produce irritation. There is always a possibility of an unsatisfactory result, persistent pain, or a desire for additional skin removal requiring subsequent surgery.

### **Disclaimer**

Informed-consent documents are used to communicate information about the proposed surgical treatment along with the disclosure of risks and alternative forms of treatment, including no surgery. The informed-consent process attempts to define principles of risk disclosure but should not be considered all-inclusive. It is important that you read this information carefully and have all your questions answered before signing your consent.