

Surgical Services: Arm Lift

Arm lifts are usually performed under general anesthesia on an outpatient basis. Incisions are made between the armpit and the elbow, and sutures are used to close the wounds. Recovery takes at least a week. Most normal activities can be resumed after three or four weeks. You should expect some scarring.

WHAT CAN I EXPECT BEFORE AND AFTER TREATMENT?

Before your treatment

You'll begin with a consultation with a surgeon, who will talk to you about your health goals and give you an examination. The surgeon will check your arms to assess your skin tone and the amount of loose skin in the area. Together, you'll discuss the various options available and decide on the treatment that's right for you.

If you decide to have an arm lift, your surgeon will give you specific instructions on how to prepare for surgery. You will be required to stop smoking and stop using nicotine patches and gum at least four to six weeks prior to surgery. You should also avoid overexposure to the sun. You may be asked to stop taking certain medications, including some that may increase bleeding. Don't go on a strict diet before your treatment, because a diet could make it harder for your body to heal.

If you develop a cold or infection, your procedure may be postponed.

You'll have a permanent scar but the scar will lighten over time.

After your treatment

Arm lifts are typically an outpatient procedure. We encourage you to start walking as soon as possible to get your blood circulating. You should not do any exercise more strenuous than walking during the four to six weeks following surgery, and should not lift more than 10 pounds for six weeks.

Your medical care team will work with you to relieve pain and help you feel as comfortable as possible. You will need to arrange for someone to drive you home after your surgery and to help you out at home for a couple of days.

Some people return to work two to three weeks after the procedure, while others take three to four weeks to recover. People who are in good physical condition recover more quickly.

ARE THERE ANY RISK?

As with any surgery, there are risks associated with an arm lift. They include bleeding, infection, scars, asymmetry, rippling of the skin, tissue loss, and decreased sensation of the skin. At Kaiser Permanente, we believe you should fully understand all that's involved in your surgery and have realistic expectations. Your surgeon will take the time you need to discuss the potential risks as well as postoperative care.