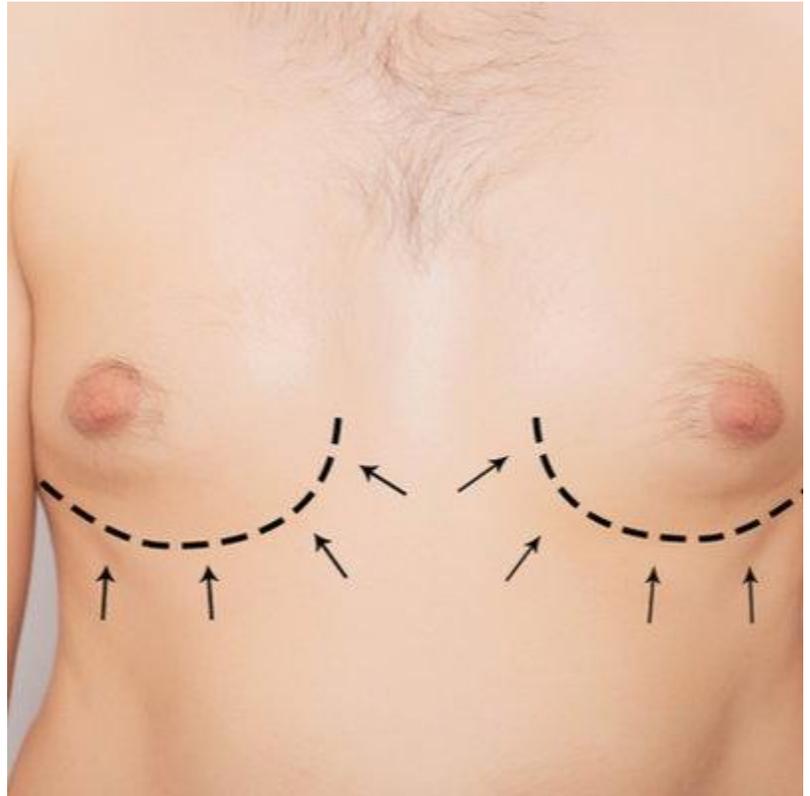


# Gynecomastia Surgery

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## Overview

Gynecomastia is a condition affecting men that causes enlargement of breast tissue. Certain hormone imbalances in men can cause one or both breasts to become enlarged, resulting in low self-esteem, body image issues, and often physical comorbidities. Although this condition is usually temporary during periods of hormonal changes like puberty, men suffering chronic breast enlargement can now undergo gynecomastia surgery to reduce or remove excess breast tissue.



## What Causes Gynecomastia?

As one of the most common breast tissue disorders in men, gynecomastia is a fairly harmless condition affecting men worldwide. The condition is typically caused by a shift in hormones, including an increase in estrogen and decreased testosterone levels. While gynecomastia can be a normal occurrence during puberty, the condition may also be associated with the use of certain medications as well as underlying medical conditions such as liver or kidney disease, endocrine disorders, or cancer. Patients suffering from chronic cases of gynecomastia may be candidates for surgery, and determining the cause of gynecomastia can better help doctors and their patients make an informed decision.

### Symptoms of Gynecomastia

The most notable symptom of gynecomastia in men is the enlargement of one or both breasts. Although the difference in breast size may be mild or barely noticeable in the beginning, the first symptom of this condition is often a small, fatty deposit or lump beneath the nipple that may cause discomfort and soreness. Oftentimes, the breasts will grow at disproportionate rates resulting in an asymmetrical appearance.

### When to Consider Surgery

Under certain circumstances, gynecomastia surgery may be an option for men suffering from the condition who have tried medical therapies with little to no success. However, all surgical procedures involve a certain amount of risk, and patients should have a discussion with their doctor regarding the procedures and their risks.

## How is Gynecomastia Surgery Performed?

Depending on the severity of the condition, options for gynecomastia surgery range from minimally invasive liposuction procedures to surgical removal of breast tissue in more severe cases.

- **Minimally Invasive Gynecomastia Surgery**

For mild cases of gynecomastia, doctors may recommend liposuction procedures to remove excess fat from the breast area. This procedure can often be performed as an outpatient procedure in about 2 hours using local anesthesia techniques.

- **Surgical Gynecomastia Options**

For patients with more severe cases of gynecomastia, surgical removal of excess breast tissue by a board-certified plastic surgeon may be warranted. The most common procedure involves making an incision around the areola while under general anesthesia. This allows access to the surgical site while reducing the appearance of scarring postoperatively. In extreme cases, a larger surgical incision underneath the breast may be required.

## Preparing for Gynecomastia Surgery

When preparing for gynecomastia surgery, patients should ensure they have a clear understanding of what the procedure entails, as well as what to expect during recovery. In addition to having a conversation with their physician, patients should ensure that they are physically healthy prior to surgery. This includes things like stopping smoking and drinking alcohol, eating a balanced diet, and avoiding taking prescription medications that may increase the risk of bleeding.

## **Gynecomastia Surgery Recovery**

Depending on the type of surgery performed, recovery from gynecomastia surgery can take anywhere from 1-2 weeks up to 8 weeks. Many surgical cases will require the use of drains placed underneath the skin that allow excess inflammatory fluids to be expelled and decrease the risk of infection. Steps that patients can take to aid in the healing process include the use of alternating warm and cold compresses, gentle massage, compression vests, and maintaining adequate nutrition.

## **Gynecomastia Surgery Complications**

As with all surgical procedures, gynecomastia surgery is not without its fair share of risk. Patients recovering from this procedure may experience excessive bruising, infection, scarring, excessive bleeding, anesthetic complications, and other potentially life-threatening complications. Patients suffering from postoperative complications should seek immediate medical care.

Gynecomastia surgery may not be the right option for all patients, but for men whose lives are impacted by this disease, surgical removal of breast tissue can be a life-changing procedure. Although liposuction will permanently remove fat cells from the body, gynecomastia may reappear in surgical cases where the underlying cause has not been identified and treated. Patients considering this procedure should ensure they have a thorough conversation with a medical professional before undergoing surgery.