

Male Breast Reduction (Gynecomastia) General Information

Gynecomastia is a medical term that comes from the Greek words for “woman-like breasts.” Although it is not often talked about, gynecomastia is more common than you may think, affecting an estimated 40 to 60 percent of men. In some men it affects both breasts, in some only one.

Certain drugs and medical problems have been linked to male breast overdevelopment, but in most cases there is no known cause.

If you have overdeveloped breasts and feel self-conscious about the appearance of your chest, a recently developed surgical technique called tumescent method liposuction can correct the problem. Liposuction is an effective tool for the permanent removal of these localized excess fatty tissues and can restore a slimmer, more masculine chest contour.

Deciding if surgery is right for you

The ideal candidate for liposuction is a healthy man with localized areas of fat deposits in the breast area that are disproportionate to the rest of the chest.

- If you are obese or overweight, you will be advised to attempt to correct the problem with weight loss before considering surgery.
- Men who drink alcohol to excess or smoke marijuana are usually also not considered good candidates for the surgery.

Preparing for your surgery

At your initial consultation, your surgeon will take a complete medical history. Having your surgeon know about your medical background is very important, so please be sure to provide all the information you can.

If you decide to proceed with treatment, your surgeon will give you specific instructions, including guidelines on eating, drinking and taking certain vitamins and medications.



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Because smoking decreases circulation and interferes with proper healing, your surgeon will also instruct you to stop smoking for a minimum of one to two weeks before your surgery and during your recovery.

Understand the procedure

Liposuction for gynecomastia may be performed under either general or local anaesthesia. Your surgeon will see you before the operation to answer any questions you may have and to draw some reference lines on the areas slated for liposuction.

- If your procedure is being done under local anaesthesia, you will be given antibiotic and sedative tablets before it begins and a small needle will be placed in one of your veins so you can be given sedation.
- If your surgery is being done under a general anaesthetic you will proceed directly to the operating theatre once your surgeon has spoken with you.

In the theatre, your skin will be cleaned with iodine and you will receive an injection of local anaesthetic, after which several small (2-3mm) incisions will be made in the skin. A solution containing an anaesthetic and a substance to help prevent bruising will then be injected into the fat through these incisions.

Once the area is fully numbed, the fat is removed using a fine needle, called a cannula, which is attached by tubing to a strong suction machine.

- If your liposuction is being performed under local anaesthesia you will be asked to change position from time to time to give the surgeon better access to fat deposits. You will also be asked to stand several times so the progress of the procedure can be assessed.
- When the procedure is over, absorbent pads and a pressure garment will be applied and you'll be taken to your room.



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Recovering from your surgery

Most patients stay in hospital overnight, however you may go home if you choose once the effects of your anaesthetic or sedation have worn off.

- You will be given written post-operative instructions and a follow-up appointment will be arranged for you in six weeks.
- You will also be given painkillers and antibiotics.
- Should you choose to go home, you will need to arrange transport as you will not be able to drive for 24 hours.

You can expect your recovery to be rapid but there will be some swelling and bruising of the treated area. You can help reduce this by wearing a firm support garment for at least three days or until the fluid drainage stops.

The worst of the swelling will subside in the first few weeks, however it may be as much as two months before the full effect of the surgery is apparent.

- It is common to experience some numbness or tingling of the skin soon after your procedure but this should settle rapidly.
- It is important not to engage in vigorous activities for the first five days after surgery.
- You may return to work and resume most of your normal activities after three weeks and begin to exercise after six.



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Evaluating risks and complications

Liposuction is an extremely safe procedure and most patients are extremely satisfied. However, as with all surgical procedures complications sometimes occur.

- Infection is rare and you will be given antibiotics during your procedure and for five days afterwards.
- There will be small (2-3mm) scars which will initially be red. Over a number of weeks, however, these should fade to fine white lines. It is important to keep your scars out of direct sunlight until they have faded as exposing them to sunlight can affect skin pigmentation, causing the scars to turn dark. If sun exposure is unavoidable, you will need to use a strong sun block.
- Following liposuction, the skin retracts, however in some people - particularly those who are older - it may not retract fully. If this happens, the excess skin may need to be removed at a later date.
- There is the possibility of skin irregularities, however this is minimized by the use of very fine needles.