

Types of Gynecomastia

Gynecomastia can come in all shapes and sizes, from being barely noticeable to something painful and virtually impossible to hide. Most grading systems rate the severity of the condition from 1 to 4, with 4 being the most severe, while others use a more granular approach, adding 2 or even 3 extra levels of severity.

Type 1

Type 2

Type 3

Type 4

Type 5

Type 6

Type 7

Most doctors tend to refer to Type 1 gynecomastia as puffy nipples, where the breasts are composed of dense, firm glandular tissue. Type 1 patients tend to be thin men with lean body mass. Treatment for this variation of gynecomastia usually consists of a mildly invasive surgical procedure during which glandular breast tissue is removed. For puffy nipples or puffy areolae, both are corrected with a fairly minor surgical procedure conducted under local anesthesia.

Type 1

Type 2

Type 3

Type 4

Type 5

Type 6

Type 7

Type 2 is the most common variation of gynecomastia. The best and most popular way to treat Type 2 gynecomastia is through liposuction. However, in some cases, when patients find themselves with a combination of both excess fatty and glandular tissue, physicians need to treat the condition by surgically removing the tissue in addition to liposuction.

In these instances doctors will make sure the chest is contoured to match a normal chest using liposuction before removing the excess breast tissue, using a 2-3cms incision near the areola. With this treatment 90% of the excess breast tissue is removed to return the chest back to its normal male contour. Why only 90%, you ask? Because removing 100% of the breast or liposuction that's too aggressive could lead to a sunken chest appearance (also known as crater deformity), something you certainly don't want either.

Type 1

Type 2

Type 3

Type 4

Type 5

Type 6

Type 7

With Type 3 gynecomastia you're looking at a chest angle of 45-60 degrees. Due to the angle involved breasts noticeably start to sag at this range so treatment depends a lot on a persons age and the quality of their skin encompassing the general area. Treatment for Type 3 gynecomastia almost always involves surgery to remove the excess breast tissue.

Type 1	Type 2	Type 3	Type 4	Type 5	Type 6	Type 7
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Guys who develop Type 4 gynecomastia typically have breasts at a chest angle of 60-90 degrees. At this stage a significant amount of chest sag is already present, so some skin will have to be removed in order to reduce its visibility. Liposuction can only remove so much fat from any one area, so surgical removal of the excess breast tissue is pretty well the only way to proceed in these cases.

Type 1	Type 2	Type 3	Type 4	Type 5	Type 6	Type 7
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With Type 5 Gynecomastia sagging breast tissue falls below the chest fold and is clearly visible. The bottom of the areola is located above the chest fold and is also visible. To treat Type 5 gynecomastia an anchor lift is required in order to properly tighten the chest. Guys with Type 5 are left with excess skin that needs to be removed through a combination of liposuction and surgery.

Type 1	Type 2	Type 3	Type 4	Type 5	Type 6	Type 7
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With Type 6 Gynecomastia the breast tissue sag is extreme, to the extent that it falls below the chest fold. It's usually visible extending under patients arm pits and towards their backs. If the patient is significantly overweight, liposuction can be employed to flatten the breast and decrease any fatty deposits. Nevertheless, the glandular breast tissue typically needs to be surgically removed at this point.

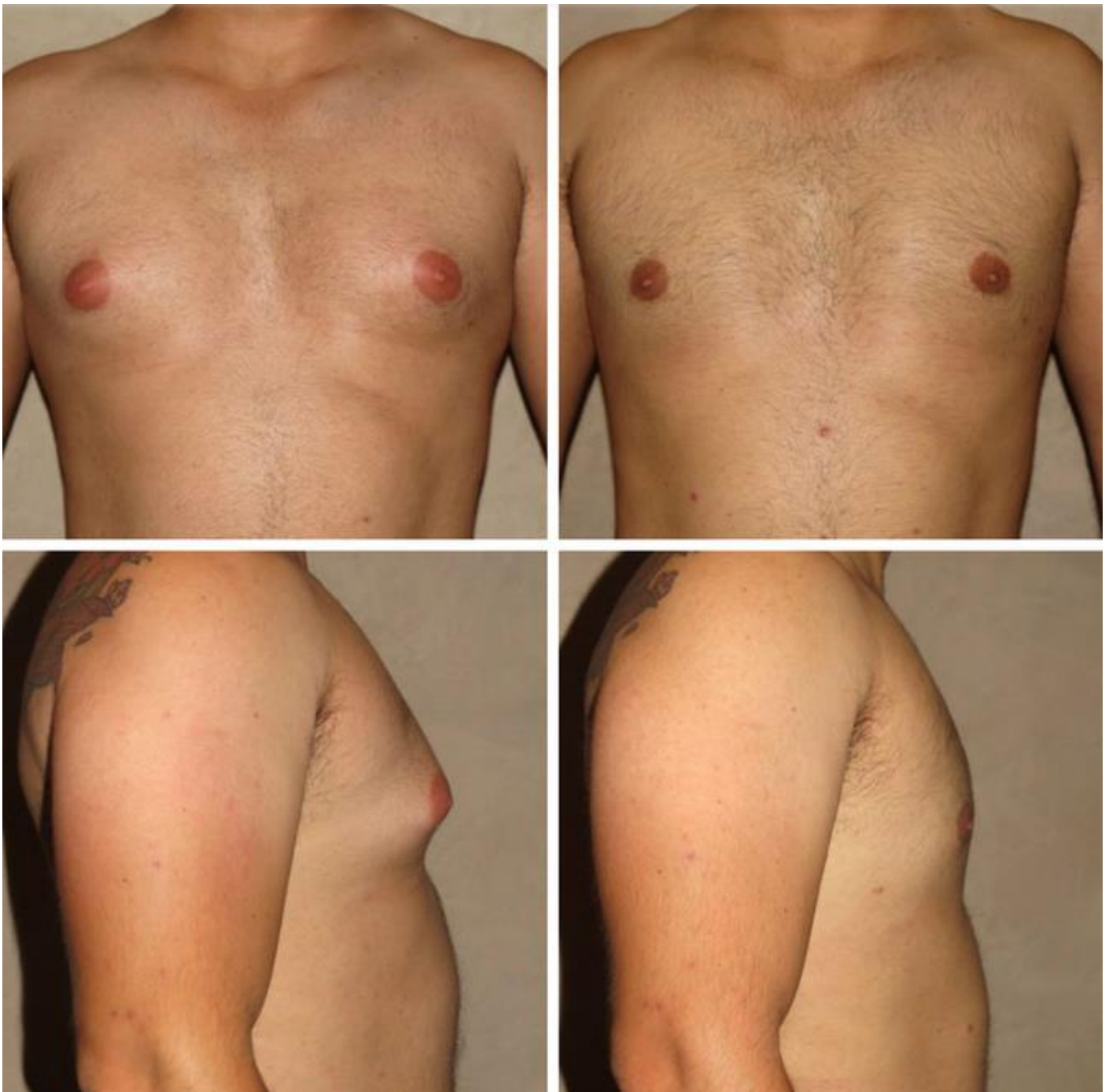
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With Type 7 gynecomastia the top of the areola sags well below the level of the chest fold. Chances are there will be noticeable volume in the breast, often extending towards the patients back. Apparently breasts with Type 7 gynecomastia can grow as large as tennis balls or good-sized grapefruits. I mean we're talking DD cups here, fellas. At this level surgical removal of the excess breast tissue is the only viable treatment to address the problem.

The following pictures – courtesy of Beverly Hills plastic surgeon Dr. Babak Dadvand – adhere to the most commonly used criteria for classifying gynecomastia cases, from a scale of 1 to 4.



Type 1 gynecomastia: mild severity. A localized button of tissue that is concentrated around the areola.
Photos taken before and 7 months after surgery.



Type 2 gynecomastia: mild to high severity. Moderate breast enlargement exceeding areola boundaries , with edges that are indistinct from the chest. Photos taken before and 3 months after surgery.



Type 3 gynecomastia: high, visible severity. Moderate breast enlargement exceeding areola boundaries , with edges that are indistinct from the chest. Photos taken before and 4 months after surgery.



Type 4 gynecomastia: severe and visibly feminine. Marked breast enlargement with skin redundancy and feminization of the breast. Photos taken before and 5 months after surgery.

Choosing a Plastic Surgeon You Can Trust

While in the grand scheme of things male breast reduction surgery is arguably a relatively minor procedure, as with any plastic surgery you want to be absolutely certain your doctor is a certified member of the American Society of Plastic Surgeons (ASPS). This is very important. After all, you don't want to find yourself appearing in an upcoming episode of "Plastic Surgery Disasters", do you?

The ASPS is recognized by the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS), which has been approving medical specialty boards going all the way back to 1934. There is no ABMS recognized certifying board with the words "cosmetic surgery" in its name. Be wary, going under the knife is serious business regardless of the procedure, and there's simply far too many questionable practitioners out there who lack the appropriate training to take on these surgeries but are all too eager to take your money and hope for the best.

By choosing a member of the American Society of Plastic Surgeons, you can be assured that you've chosen a qualified, highly trained plastic surgeon who is board-certified by the American Board of Plastic Surgery (ABPS) or the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada (RCPSC). All ASPS member surgeons must meet the following rigorous standards before being accredited certification by the ABPS or RCPSC:

- Complete at least six years of surgical training following medical school with a minimum of three years of plastic surgery residency training
- Pass comprehensive oral and written exams
- Graduate from an accredited medical school
- Complete continuing medical education, including patient safety, every year
- Perform surgery in accredited, state-licensed, or Medicare-certified surgical facilities
- Don't let yourself become confused by other official sounding groups. The American Society of Plastic Surgeons is the largest plastic surgery specialty organization in the world. Founded in 1931, it represents 94% of all board-certified plastic surgeons in the United States.

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Sidenote: gynecomastia treatment through pills and medications

Beware of modern day snake oil salesmen hawking pills and other miracle cures alleged to "cure" gynecomastia. To date **there is no legitimate evidence suggesting there is any efficacy whatsoever to these alleged cures**. While it's true that adult gynecomastia might go away if left untreated and one's hormones start to stabilize and balance out, it's rare. Gynecomastia also isn't something you can combat strictly through diet and/or exercise. While always beneficial to a healthy lifestyle, of course, diet and exercise alone are not the solutions to correct gynecomastia.

Gynecomastia Reduction Surgery Pricing

Male breast reduction surgery costs can vary widely. According to statistics from the American Society of Plastic Surgeons (ASPS), in 2014 the average cost of gynecomastia reduction surgery in the United States was roughly \$3,000-\$3,500. But that price doesn't necessarily include anesthesia, operating room facilities or other related expenses. Once everything is factored in the final tally will likely be closer to \$6,000 or \$7,000.

Final gynecomastia surgery costs will most likely include:

- Anesthesia fees
- Hospital or surgical facility costs
- Medical tests
- Post-surgery garments
- Prescription medications
- Surgeon's fee

Prices can also depend on a surgeons level of experience, the actual procedure required, and where in North America they're located. So it's definitely not cheap, but also not so expensive to be priced entirely out of range for most Americans. And remember, if these costs are a little more than you can handle all at once, many plastic surgeons offer patient financing plans for GRS procedures, so be sure to look into it should money be an issue.

Gynecomastia Reduction Surgery (GRS) and Health Insurance

Unfortunately, **most health insurance plans do not cover the correction of gynecomastia**. That being said, insurance policy's vary greatly so it's worth looking into anyway, you've certainly nothing to lose by inquiring.

To this end The American Society of Plastic Surgeons has published a position paper for physicians and insurers that defines the recommended criteria for reconstructive cases of gynecomastia. Ask your doctor for a copy and submit it to your insurer. Hey, you never know. The ASPS firmly believes that people fitting the following qualifications should routinely be covered by their health insurance policies:

- Men whose condition can't be corrected through any other medical treatments
- Men who are physically healthy and of relatively normal weight who have no life-threatening illnesses or medical conditions that could impair healing
- Non-smokers and non-drug users
- Men whose breast development has stabilized
- Men bothered by their breasts being too large

Sometimes adolescents can also benefit from surgery, although secondary procedures will likely be required in the future should breast development continue.



[RELATED: WHEN INSURANCE WILL COVER PLASTIC SURGERY PROCEDURES](#)

Preparing for Your First Consultation

When going to your first gynecomastia surgery consultation be prepared to discuss the following with your doctor:

- Your goals with this surgery
- All of your medical conditions, drug allergies and/or medical treatments you're undergoing
- Any medications you take regularly, be they prescription drugs, steroids, vitamins, herbal supplements, alcohol, tobacco, or recreational drugs like cannabis, cocaine, or opiates.
- Any prior surgeries you've undergone.

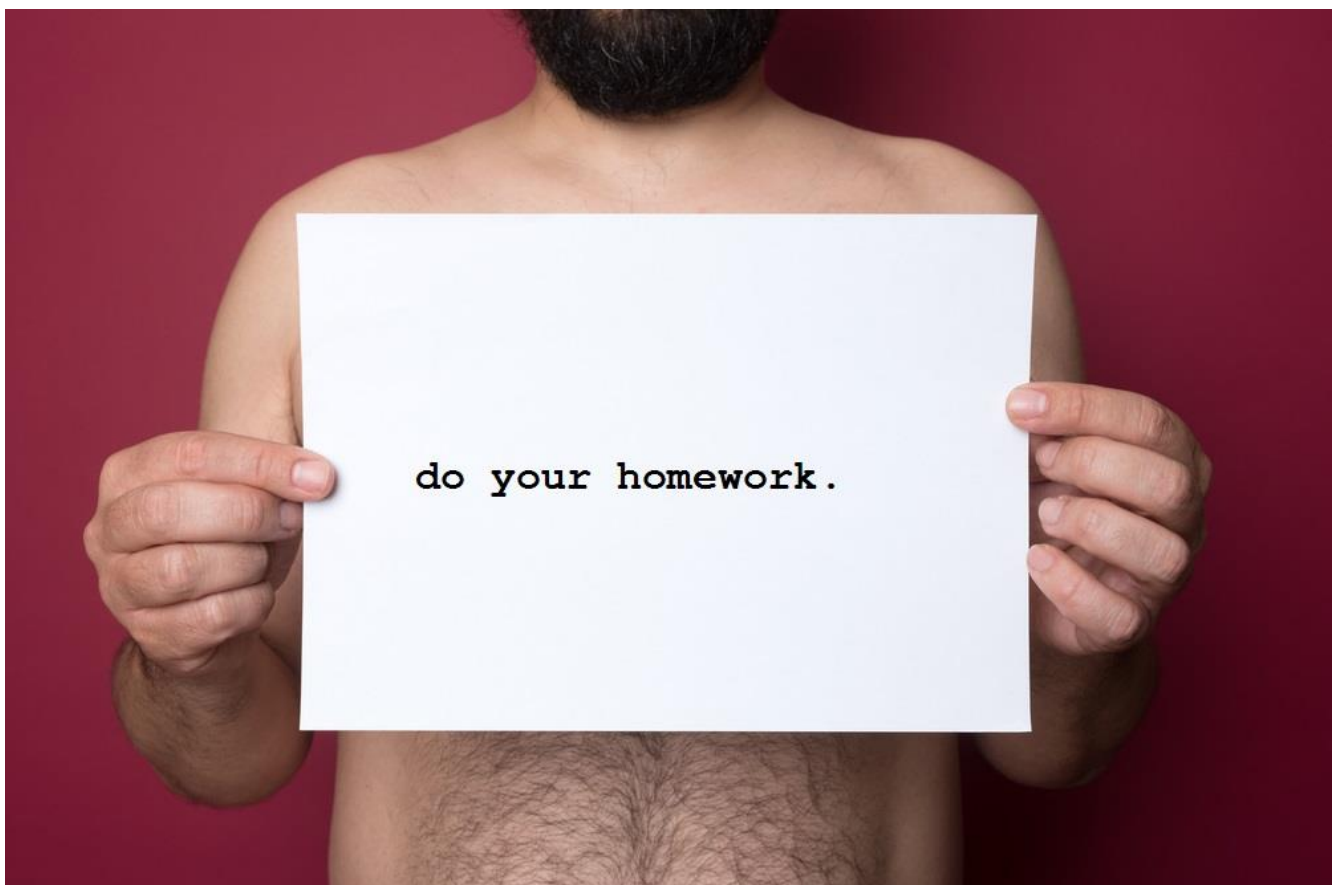
Your doctor might also choose to:

- Evaluate your general health status and any pre-existing health conditions or risk factors
- Request a copy of your medical records
- Discuss your options and recommend a course of treatment
- Discuss likely outcomes of gynecomastia correction and any potential complications
- Discuss the type of anesthesia he/she feels is appropriate for your surgery
- Perform diagnostic testing to determine the underlying cause of gynecomastia, including the testing of your endocrine function
- Examine your breasts, taking detailed measurements of their size and shape, skin quality, and the placement of your nipples and areolas

In the days leading up to your surgery, your doctor might ask you to:

- Go for lab testing – or get a medical evaluation
- Start taking certain medications or adjust the medications you're currently taking
- Stop smoking
- Avoid taking aspirin, any anti-inflammatories or herbal supplements as they can increase bleeding

The success and safety of your specific gynecomastia procedure very much relies on your being perfectly candid during your consultation. Be prepared to answer – and ask – several questions about your health, expectations, and overall lifestyle.



Checklist: questions to ask your doctor

- Am I a good candidate for this procedure?
- What will be expected of me to get the best results?
- Where and how will you perform my procedure?
- What surgical technique is recommended for me?
- Are you certified by the American Board of Plastic Surgery?
- Were you trained specifically in the field of plastic surgery?
- How many years of plastic surgery training have you had?
- Do you have hospital privileges to perform this procedure? If so, at which hospitals?
- Is the office-based surgical facility accredited by a nationally- or state-recognized accrediting agency, or is it state-licensed or Medicare-certified?
- How long of a recovery period can I expect, and what kind of help will I need during my recovery?
- What are the risks and complications associated with my procedure?
- How are complications handled?
- What are my options if I am dissatisfied with the outcome of my surgery?
- Do you have before-and-after photos I can look at for this procedure and what results are reasonable for me?

Your Gynecomastia Surgery, Step by Step

The intended result of male breast surgery is to reduce breast size and all redundant breast tissue with the ultimate goal being to enhance the contours of the chest. GRS should reduce or eliminate any physical discomfort associated with the area, not to mention finally rid patients of the emotional dissatisfaction and/or embarrassment gynecomastia has caused them.

Your gynecomastia reduction surgery (GRS) will likely take place in either an accredited, office-based surgical facility or a hospital. These surgeries are almost always performed on an outpatient basis. Try to make sure you have somebody who can drive you to and from your surgery and ideally stay with you for at least your first night post-operation. And while yes, it's true, the chance of any complications resulting from your GRS is highly unlikely, you really should do your best to follow the surgeon's recovery guidelines. After all, better safe than sorry.

Also, don't forget that for guys with Type 7 gynecomastia or a particularly large amount of redundant breast tissue, more than one procedure might be required. These staged procedures, however, can also have their benefits, primarily because they sometimes result in any scars resulting from their surgery being that much more subtle.

The 3 Steps of GRS

1. Anesthesia

Anesthetic options include intravenous sedation and general anesthesia. Depending on the type of gynecomastia being treated, your surgeon will recommend the best option for you. General, intravenous and local anesthesia are all at times used for GRS. However, the anesthetic you'll be given will be based upon the severity and procedure your plastic surgeon has determined most suitable for your specific condition.

2. Liposuction

In cases where gynecomastia is primarily the result of excess fatty tissue, liposuction alone will most likely be used. This involves the insertion of a cannula – essentially a thin, hollow tube – through several small

incisions. The cannula is then moved back and forth in a controlled motion to loosen any excess fat, which is subsequently removed from the body by vacuum suction.

For mild to moderate gynecomastia specific types of liposuction cannulas are often used in conjunction with direct removal of excess breast glandular tissue through these small incisions. Other specific techniques can reduce the areola when required, or reposition the nipple to create the appearance of a more natural contour.

There are actually a few different liposuction techniques your doctor can choose to remove any excess fat resulting from gynecomastia. He or she will discuss the technique they feel is most appropriate for your situation prior to surgery.

3. Excision

Excision is recommended when glandular breast tissue or excess skin must be removed to correct gynecomastia. Excision is also required when the areola must be reduced or the nipple repositioned to reflect a more natural male contour. Excision patterns will vary depending on your surgeon's preference and the specific conditions involved.

Male Breast Surgery Risks and Safety

As with any surgical procedure, there's always some element of risk. Realistically, however, you can rest assured open-heart surgery or removing brain tumors are considerably riskier ordeals than a relatively simple operation to treat gynecomastia. Nevertheless, you should still always be aware of the potential risks before undergoing any type of surgery.

Again as with any medical operation, a board-certified plastic surgeon will always ask you in advance to sign a consent form acknowledging the risks, while agreeing you're prepared to throw caution to the wind and take your chances with the operation. With something like gynecomastia, however, it's essentially nothing much more than a legal formality. These are some of the risks you should be aware of before agreeing to GRS:

- Potential reactions to tape, suture materials, glues, topical preparations or injected agents
- General anesthesia risks, as with any surgical procedure requiring anesthesia
- Hematoma, ie localized collection of blood outside of the blood vessels, usually in liquid form within the tissue
- Blood clots
- Breast asymmetry, contour or shape irregularities
- Changes in nipple and/or breast sensation (be it temporary or permanent)
- Temporary or permanent damage to deeper structures like nerves, blood vessels, muscles, and lungs.
- Deep vein thrombosis, cardiac and pulmonary complications
- Fatty tissue found in the breast could die (also known as fat necrosis)
- Seroma (excess fluid accumulation)
- Infection
- Persistent pain
- Wounds sometimes heal poorly
- The possibility revisional surgery will be necessary
- Visible scarring

These risks and any others specific to your situation should be fully discussed with your doctor prior to giving your consent for GRS. Even if the risks involved are rare and relatively minor, this isn't the time to be shy. This is important stuff, after all, so be sure to ask questions. For instance, in some rare instances your surgeon might not be able to deliver optimal results with only one surgery. A follow up surgery might then

be necessary to treat any potential complications from the initial surgery, or to address any additional tightening or repositioning of the breasts that could be required.

You should do yourself the favor of making sure you understand all the aspects of the surgical procedure about to be performed on you. It's perfectly normal to feel some anxiety about it all, whether it's just excitement for your soon-to-be new chest or the result of preoperative stress. Don't be timid when it comes to discussing any potential insecurities you may have with your plastic surgeon.

Gynecomastia Surgery Recovery

For the first few weeks following your surgery you can typically expect to see some swelling, bruising, and a temporary diminished feeling in your chest and nipples. But not to worry, all of these symptoms will gradually subside over those weeks and any permanent scarring from gynecomastia surgical procedures is minimal.

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Over the course of your recovery period bandages will be applied to your incisions and a support garment possibly employed to help minimize any swelling that occurs while supporting your new chest contour as it heals. In some instances a small thin tube might temporarily be placed under the skin to drain any excess blood or fluids that could possibly collect. Make sure your surgical incisions aren't subjected to any excessive force, swelling, abrasion, or intense motion throughout the period you are healing.

You should also avoid participating in sports or any form of strenuous exercise for roughly one month post-op and not expect to be fully recovered for another 3 to 6 months after that, although the amount of recovery time required tends to vary from patient to patient.

Your doctor will provide you with any specific instructions you'll need on how best to care for the surgical site and drains, as well as which medications to apply in order to aid with the healing process and reduce the potential for infection. At the same time he/she will inform you about any specific concerns with the surgical site he/she believes you may need to address along with a date for your follow up appointment.

In most cases, the final results of gynecomastia are permanent. That said, if gynecomastia waltzed into your life because you've been taking steroids or certain recreational drugs known to be causative factors of the condition, you're going to have to change your behaviour and stop taking these substances or risk growing yourself another rack of man boobs.

It's not only recreational drugs like pot and opiates that can cause the condition either: there are plenty of prescription medications that spark the disease as well, so you'll need to go over everything you're taking with your doctor and from there decide together which medications, if any, need to be cut from your regimen. Similarly, if your bout with gynecomastia resulted from excessive weight gain, one of the more common caustive factors of the condition, you'll need to remain at a stable weight in order to maintain your results.

Over the recovery period you should pay attention to any significant shortness of breath or unusual, irregular heart beats. The chances of anything like this happening are very slight, however, should you experience either of these symptoms it could actually indicate something quite serious, so don't just shrug it off and get yourself on over to the hospital, where you might be invited to stay awhile should you need any additional unforeseen treatment.

Gynecomastia Reduction Surgery Results

Partial results of GRS procedures are immediately visible and with time any post-surgical swelling will resolve and the incision lines will fade. The final results become fully visible over the period of a few months. While it's true the incision lines are permanent, they continue to fade over time and really shouldn't much cause for concern.

Any surgical treatment to correct gynecomastia will involve incisions, and while most of these incision lines are concealed within natural contours, there's a likelihood that some may be visible. There's simply no way around it, but take heart in the knowledge that scarring from GRS procedures is very slight.

Regardless of any minor scarring, going for GRS is a pretty good trade-off once all is said and done. There's simply no question your new upper-body is going to enhance your self-image and confidence, which has probably been pretty low the past little while. This factor alone, forgetting any of the pain or discomfort, would be reason enough for most guys to want to get those unsightly growths off of their chest regardless of any potential sacrifices involved.

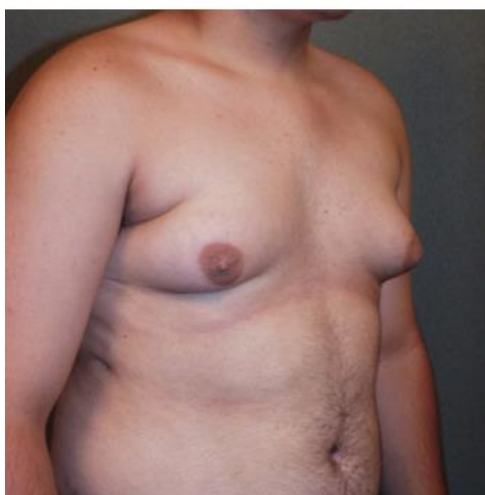
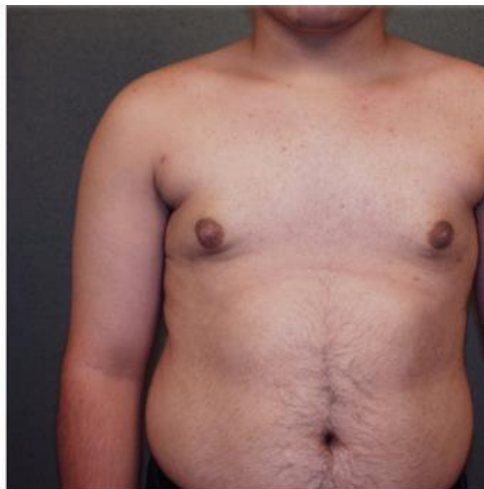
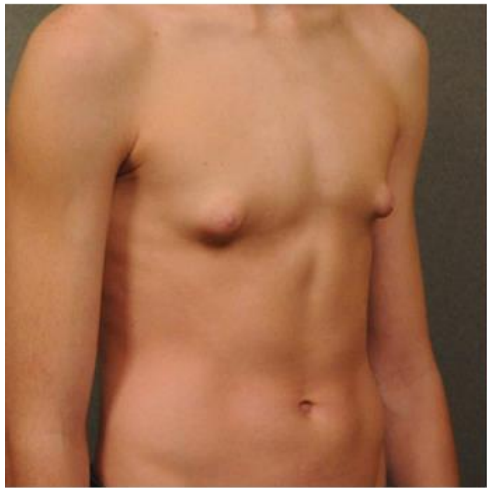
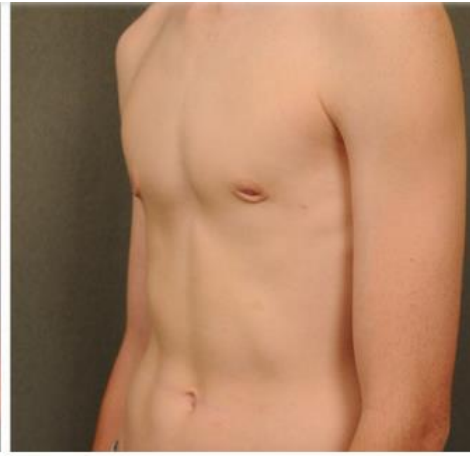
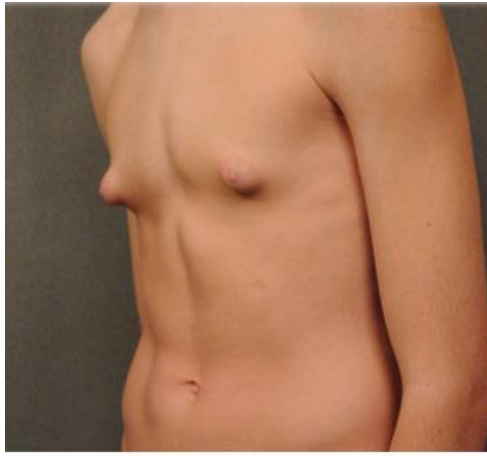


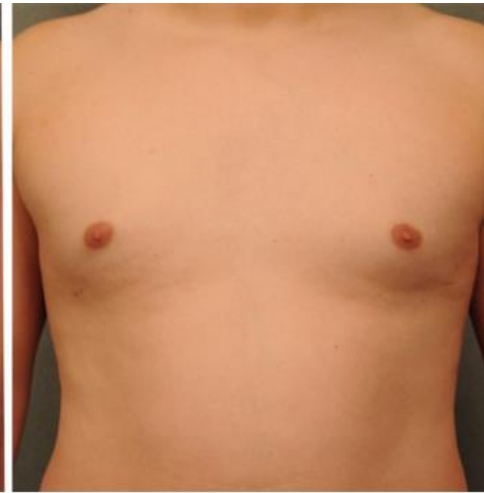
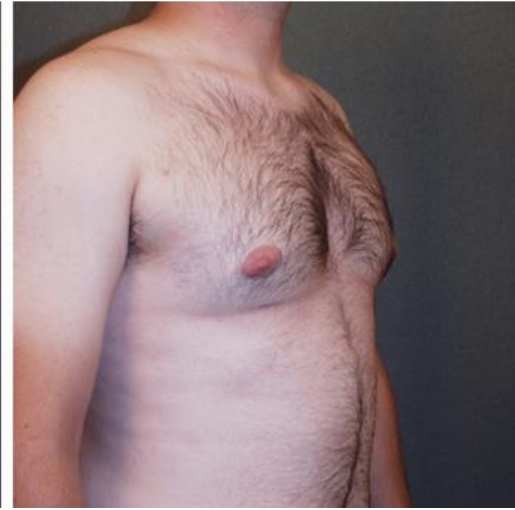
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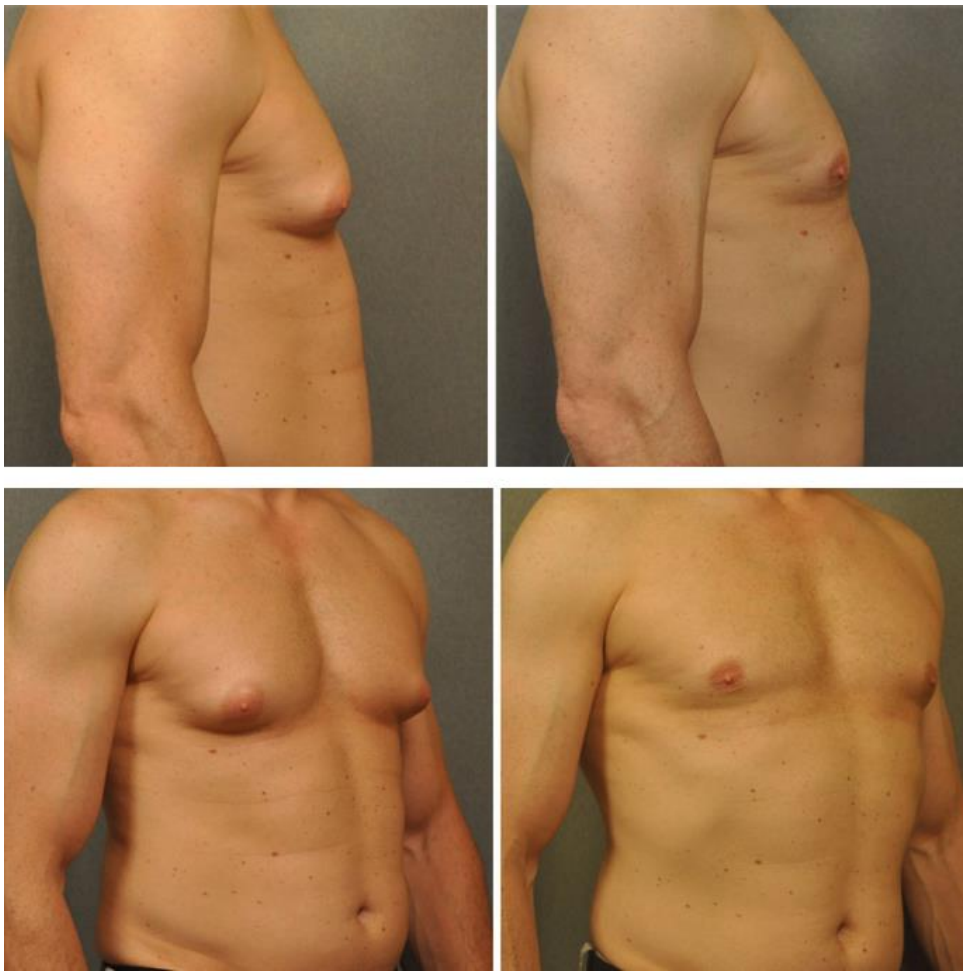
To be finally free of the condition is a huge thing for gynecomastia patients. Imagine, you can finally go swimming at the local pool free of embarrassment again, or shower after gym class without being teased by your classmates, looking to cop a feel all the time.

The self-confidence that returns to patients post-surgery can't be overstated. In fact, losing the psychological/emotional scars that come part and parcel with this genuinely traumatic condition might well be the most difficult element of recovery for most people afflicted by it.

Before and After Pictures







All post-surgery photos taken approximately three months later. Credits: Dr. Gilbert Lee, Changes Plastic Surgery