

## GYNECOMASTIA

Gynecomastia, actually the breakdown of the word, is male breast, and all men have breast tissue which is why men can get breast cancer, actually.

Depending on how much breast tissue a man has, will determine where they are on a scale of normal or abnormal (when it comes to gynecomastia), but the real bottom line is if it bothers a person then you know it is probably worthwhile seeing if this is something we should treat. **NOTE:** There is little doubt that gynecomastia is as psychological to a man as it is physical. However, insurance companies will not accept psychological distress as a medical need for gynecomastia surgery, unfortunately.

Unfortunately, there are not a lot of good medications, really, to treat gynecomastia and so we are left generally with surgery. Surgery, basically is designed to do a few things: One is to remove the breast tissue, not all the breast tissue, of course, because the nipple is part of the breast. This is not a mastectomy (complete removal of breast tissue), but enough breast tissue to smooth out the breast and get it to a volume of breast tissue that is considered more normal (and acceptable to the patient).

The second thing is removing fat. Fat is not a major component of all breasts, but, in people that are overweight, it certainly is, and so we will combine liposuction with glandular excision to treat gynecomastia in almost all cases.

The incisions for gynecomastia include the incisions for liposuction, which are generally either around the armpit or one in the areola (pigmented tissue that contains the nipple) that is combined with a 3 to 9 o' clock incision around the areola right on the border light skin and dark skin (to camouflage the scar).

The good news is the incisions heal generally very well, and by six months almost all of them are not very visible to most people. For the most part, gynecomastia is one of the "slam-dunk" operations where men feel great about themselves when they can now wear a T-shirt and not worry about what they consider puffy nipples, or take their shirt off at the pool or beach and feel really good about themselves. So, this is one of the operations that is well tolerated, very safe, and has a super high satisfaction rate.

**TAKE HOME POINT:** Gynecomastia surgery removes fat and glandular tissue to reshape the male breast. Excess skin can be excised but often is not necessary given the remarkable ability for the skin of the male chest to tighten after surgery.