



Gynaecomastia (Male breast tissue)

What is it?

Gynaecomastia is the formation of breast tissue in men. This can be quite distressing and make them understandably self-conscious. Many boys get this at puberty but it settles. Those in whom it doesn't settle may seek help. There is usually no reason for getting gynaecomastia in the majority of men who have it. In some however certain medical conditions and medications can be associated, and Mr Callan will check for these.

Is Mr Callan experienced at this procedure?

This is an important question to ask. Not only is Mr Callan experienced at this procedure, but he performs gynaecomastia surgery regularly and keeps up to date with the latest techniques. It is also important to know that as a fully trained plastic surgeon Mr Callan performs this procedure to the high standards of Australian Plastic Surgery.

Can I see photographs?

You can see photographs in our office when you have a consultation. As Mr Callan performs gynaecomastia frequently, there are large numbers of photographs to look at many of which will be of patients with a problem similar to yours. We do not publish photographs on the web for a number of reasons, but the most important of these is that you need realistic photographs for your particular type of gynaecomastia.

Who has surgery for gynaecomastia?

Men who develop breast tissue which is visible or distressing. It is normal for all men to have a small amount of breast tissue, as this looks normal and gives a smooth contour to the chest. Occasionally younger males will require the surgery.

Am I suitable?

You need to be sensible, honest about your reasons, happy with your informed decision, and be as healthy as possible. What would stop me from having the surgery? You must not be smoking, outside the BMI range of 18-28, under stress when making your decision, or have a medical condition that would make surgery unsafe.

How is it done?

Gynaecomastia surgery is done in a fully accredited hospital. An incision is made around the areola (coloured part around the nipple). The excess breast tissue is removed and the skin allowed to retract onto the chest. For severe gynaecomastia some skin may need to be removed.

Are there scars?

The only incision line is one within the areola (coloured part around the nipple). Very rarely there will be a horizontal incision in severe gynaecomastia but that is rare. These incision lines are always there, but as time goes on usually improve to the extent that they are not a great concern for most men and barely visible. As a rule the incision lines are inconspicuous unless specifically searched for, or viewed at certain angles.

What are the benefits?

This is entirely a personal matter. If the size of your gynaecomastia currently distresses you, surgery may fix that. However the benefits depend on whether or not you have been properly assessed and you may need to consider other options prior to surgery, such as weight loss or cessation of some medications. This needs to be discussed if appropriate.

What are the risks?

All surgery carries some element of risk. You can minimize your risk by being as healthy as possible and as psychologically prepared as possible, by selecting an experienced and qualified surgeon, and giving yourself a stress free time during which to recover. Despite this there are some risks that you will need to discuss. The most common of these is that it takes a couple of months for the chest to assume its final shape. A few men may lose some sensation in nipples, but that is not usually a concern. There are other risks common to all surgery, and you should be aware of these.

How long am I in hospital for?

Gynaecomastia surgery can be a day procedure or overnight, depending how you pull up after the anaesthetic. Someone will need to take you home and should be with you the first night. Gynaecomastia surgery is not a particularly painful procedure, but can be a little uncomfortable for a couple of days.

How long will I need to recover?

This varies but usually ranges from a few days to a few weeks depending on what you do. If your activities are sedentary, then you may only need a few days, but if you do heavy work and lifting you may need up to three weeks. It's a good idea to take some time so as you don't put pressure on your recovery. The same guidelines apply to exercise, with mild to moderate exercise allowable early on to full aerobic activities by three weeks. By the way, you can shower within hours of surgery, as dressings are minimal (tape only). You must not drive until you are fully recovered from both the anaesthetic and the discomfort of surgery so as you are fully capable. If in doubt, don't.

Will I wear a bra after surgery?

You will be given instructions on the purchase of a garment prior to surgery. This garment is important in the early postoperative period to help flatten the chest and keep discomfort to a minimum. After a couple of weeks you can discard it.

Will I need to be seen after surgery?

Yes. We will keep in close contact with you by telephone for the first few days and then will see you about five days after surgery, then at three weeks, then at three months. You are of course welcome to call or visit anytime with any concerns.