

## Gynecomastia and Male Breast Reduction

### An introduction to the surgical solutions available



This white paper is presented by M. Azhar Ali, M.D. F.A.C.S., of Amae Plastic Surgery Center in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan. The following information about *gynecomastia and male breast reduction surgery* is only intended to be informational and introductory. We strongly advise anyone looking to have a male breast reduction procedure or cosmetic surgery of any kind to schedule a professional consultation with a plastic surgeon that is board-certified by the American Society of Plastic Surgeons.

For additional information on gynecomastia and the surgical solutions available, or to schedule an immediate consultation with Dr. Ali, please contact us:

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#### About Dr. Ali

Dr. Ali is a board-certified plastic surgeon powerfully motivated to help patients restore their self-confidence, emotional health, and beauty. Dr. Ali has successfully pursued the art of breast reduction and reconstruction in addition to many surgical and non-surgical procedures including but not limited to: facial procedures, liposuction, tummy tucks, and breast augmentation.

Through his private practice in Michigan, Amae Plastic Surgery Center, Dr. Ali has performed numerous male breast reduction surgeries and has established a distinguished career in the field. Following his medical schooling and prior to opening Amae Plastic Surgery Center, he completed 11 years of training related to plastic and reconstructive surgery, including fellowship training in Aesthetic and Reconstructive Breast Surgery at Women's College Hospital in Toronto.

In addition to his fellowship training at Women's College Hospital, Dr. Ali has completed:

- Fellowship in Microsurgery and Trauma at St. Michael's Hospital in Toronto
- 1 year fellowship at Children's Hospital in Toronto for Pediatric Surgery
- 2 years of plastic surgery at Providence Hospital
- 5 years of general surgery training at Providence and North Oakland hospitals in Michigan
- 1 year pediatric internship in New York

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Dr. Ali also belongs to numerous professional organizations within the plastic surgery field including the American College of Surgeons, American Society of Plastic Surgeons, American Medical Society, Michigan State Medical Society, and Oakland County Medical Society.

#### **Introduction: What is Gynecomastia?**

Gynecomastia is a non-life threatening condition found in boys, men, and sometimes (although rare) infants. Breast tissue swells as a result of a hormonal imbalance of estrogen and testosterone. Gynecomastia can affect one or both breasts and although this condition is somewhat common, it can be difficult to cope with.

Many men suffer from emotional discomforts including embarrassment, impaired self-confidence, and the tendency to avoid intimacy or physical activity. Some men also experience pain or tenderness in the breast(s) with this condition.

#### **Common Causes of Male Breast Swelling**

Changes in a male's levels of estrogen and testosterone cause gynecomastia, which is why this condition is often seen in boys going through puberty. Other common causes include aging, chemotherapy treatment for cancer, exposure to anabolic steroids, exposure to the estrogen hormone, marijuana use, and hormone treatment. Gynecomastia can also be seen as the side effect of certain medications. Rare causes of gynecomastia include genetic defects and tumors.

#### **What Are The Solutions for Gynecomastia?**

Gynecomastia during puberty will usually go away on its own over a period of several months; however, this condition should not be overlooked or ignored. It is always best to have any irregularities properly diagnosed by a health care provider.

If an underlying condition or cause is found, such as a certain medication's side effects or the use of steroids, your healthcare provider will devise a treatment plan to stop or limit the breast's swelling. Occasionally, hormone treatment is needed to block the effects of estrogen levels found within the body.

If the condition persists or worsens, male breast reduction surgery can help.

#### **Am I a Candidate for Male Breast Reduction Surgery?**

Male breast reduction surgery (also called reduction mammoplasty and gynecomastia surgery) has been used in many patients exhibiting long-term gynecomastia or patients in which drug therapies have not been effective.

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In order to determine whether or not a male is a candidate for breast reduction surgery, a professional consultation is needed with a board-certified plastic surgeon.

During the consultation, some or all of the following details are reviewed:

- The age of the patient
- The length of time the condition has been present
- Past surgeries
- Past and current medical conditions
- Past and current medications, vitamins and supplements
- Allergies

Occasionally, blood hormone level tests, breast ultrasounds and/or mammograms may be necessary. Generally, male patients best suited for breast reduction surgery are those who are unhappy with the size and appearance of their breasts, experience discomfort, and have first tried to attain a more defined chest through recommended treatment, diet, and exercise. Candidates should be in good health, at a stable weight, and have firm, elastic skin that will adapt to the new contours of the body.

### **The Procedure**

Prior to male breast reduction surgery, the surgeon may ask the patient to stop taking certain medications, stop smoking, and avoid products that can increase bleeding, such as aspirin, anti-inflammatory drugs, and supplements. Specific instruction for the day-of will also be provided by the surgeon performing the procedure.

It is recommended that all male breast reduction patients arrange for someone to take care of them at least the first night following surgery.

Gynecomastia surgery is performed much like a mastectomy (the surgical removal of a breast), but with limited incision sites and scarring. Incisions are usually made around the areola so that they can be camouflaged into surrounding tissues post-surgery. Although, it's important to note that incision patterns will vary depending on the specific conditions and surgical techniques.

Once the incision is made, excess breast and fatty tissue is removed from the patient's chest. At this time the areola may also be reduced in size, or the nipple repositioned, to adhere to the new breast's size and contour.

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For patients with mild to moderate conditions that do not display a lot of excess tissue, liposuction alone may be sufficient enough for significantly improving the appearance of the chest. In such cases, scars will be small and barely visible.

A board certified plastic surgeon will determine the best approach for each individual patient, as no two patients or conditions are entirely alike.

### **Healing & Recovery**

For patients with mild to moderate conditions that undergo liposuction only, they will usually go home the same day as surgery and are advised to wear a compression garment for several weeks to allow the tissues to shrink effectively. It may take several months for the patient to see the final results. It is not uncommon to have some bruising after surgery or temporary numbness, both of which will gradually resolve on their own.

For patients that have an incision made and have excess breast or fatty tissues surgically removed in addition to liposuction, recovery periods vary per patient. Patients experience soreness and discomfort and most will be wrapped in bandages for a day or so. It is extremely important that physical activity is limited post-surgery and weight-lifting restrictions are enforced. It usually takes about one week to resume somewhat normal activities. Exercise cannot be resumed for about one month.

The board-certified surgeon often works in collaboration with an anesthesiologist to make the recovery phase as pain-free as possible. The injection of long-term local anesthetics into the suture/surgery site toward the end of the procedure can help drastically reduce the amount of pain experienced following the procedure.

### **Side Effects & Risks Associated with Male Breast Reduction Surgery**

As with all cosmetic surgery procedures, there are a number of complications and side effects that may arise following a male breast reduction surgery.

The most common risks and side effects include:

- Anesthesia risks
- Bruising
- Hematoma (bleeding)
- Blood clots
- Unfavorable scarring
- Rippling of the skin
- Changes in skin pigmentation
- Changes in nipple or breast sensation

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- Fluid accumulation

To decrease the chances of experiencing any of the aforementioned risks and side effects, it is recommended that patients select an experienced and trusted plastic surgeon that is board-certified by the American Society of Plastic Surgeons.

#### **How to Prolong and Support the Best Possible Results**

The results of male breast reduction surgery are intended to be permanent. Although, carefully following a plastic surgeon's post-surgery instruction is the key to success with most plastic surgeries. As mentioned earlier, it is extremely important to limit physical activity so that surgical incisions are not subjected to abrasion or motion.

Scars will be permanent, but with proper care and an adequate amount of healing time their visibility can be significantly minimized. Patients should always avoid exposure to direct sunlight in scarred areas, as it does not permit the scars to heal correctly.

Proper diet and exercise and leading a healthy life in general will help prolong long-term results of male breast reduction surgery. Patients are advised to avoid gaining an excessive amount of weight in the future, as it will hinder or impair results.

#### **The Price of Male Breast Reduction Surgery**

Some insurance companies will cover male breast reduction surgery. It is recommended that the patient checks with their insurance company prior to determining whether or not they'd like to undergo this surgery.

Health insurance companies that do cover the procedure may require prior authorization, in which case the patient must submit some or all of the following details: type and grade of gynecomastia, length of time present, causes tested for, causes ruled out, treatments tried, and results of treatments. The surgeon and his/her office can help compile this documentation.

The cost of male breast reduction surgery can vary tremendously, as prices are based on the following:

- The plastic surgeon's experience
- The type of procedure performed
- Hospital or surgical facility costs
- Anesthesia fees
- Post-operative prescriptions
- And more...

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For patients that are not covered by their insurance company for this procedure, or for patients concerned about being able to afford the services, some plastic surgery centers, such as Amae Plastic Surgery Center, offer access to a variety of financing options.

### **Selecting Your Board-Certified Plastic Surgeon**

Male breast reduction surgery is not offered or mastered by every board-certified plastic surgeon. For the patient's satisfaction and most importantly, safety, it is crucial for the patient to confirm that the plastic surgeon meets the following criteria...

#### Qualifications

- Is the plastic surgeon board-certified in plastic surgery?
- Does the doctor have a board certification document? If so, they should be able to share it with their patients.
- Has the Doctor had fellowship training? The best plastic surgeons have accomplished fellowship training within their specific field.

#### Experience & Track Record

- How long has the doctor been in practice?
- How many male breast reduction surgeries have been performed?
- Do they have before and after pictures of male breast reduction surgeries that they can share with new patients?
- Do they have previous male breast reduction patients available to speak with?

#### Hospital Privileges

- Which hospital is the board-certified plastic surgeon affiliated with? In case of an emergency, it is important that the plastic surgeon is affiliated with a hospital and can continue taking care of his or her patient within that hospital. In unfortunate scenarios, some doctors are forced to turn the patient over to the emergency room if there is no relationship with a suitable hospital.

#### Medical Organization/Continual Involvement

- Is your plastic surgeon part of a credited medical organization? Surgeons that are members of medical organizations tend to be more qualified, because such organizations typically require that the surgeon meet stringent qualifications when it comes to being approved as a member.

Dr. Ali is a member of the American Society of Plastic Surgeons (ASPS), which is recognized by the American Board of Plastic Surgery (the highest governing board in plastic surgery).

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As a member of the ASPS, Dr. Ali is held accountable for meeting stringent qualifications, including:

- At least 6 years of training and experience in surgery with at least 3 years of plastic surgery experience
- Certification by The American Board of Plastic Surgery or The Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada
- Operates only in accredited medical facilities
- Adheres to a strict code of ethics
- Fulfills continuing education requirements including patient safety techniques
- Acts as your partner to work with you to achieve your goals

#### **Summary – A Note From Dr. Ali**

Male breast reduction surgery, although it provides the fastest route to desired results, may not be the right route for every patient. Gynecomastia can sometimes go away on its own over a period of several months or can sometimes be resolved through a variety of lifestyle changes or hormone treatment plans, which often present less risk than surgery.

At Amae Plastic Surgery Center we review all possible forms of treatment prior to determining which course of action is in the patient's best interest. The choice to have gynecomastia surgery is yours to make, and yours only. While this white paper may serve as an introduction to, and overview of, the procedure, no amount of online research is a substitute for a professional consultation with a plastic surgeon who is certified by the American Board of Plastic Surgeons.

If you believe that male breast reduction surgery is right for you, or are simply considering it, we strongly encourage you to call Amae Plastic Surgery Center in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan for your initial consultation. We believe that patient education and realistic expectations are the keys to success with any cosmetic surgical procedure. We will take the time to educate you, understand your goals, and provide you with information and options that will allow you to make the best decisions regarding your body.

*Only trust your board-certified plastic surgeon when it comes to your health and achieving your desired aesthetic outcome.*

To your health!

Dr. M. Azhar Ali, M.D., F.A.C.S.

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