

# GYNECOMASTIA: Male Breast Enlargement

By Dr. Babak Farzaneh

Although men do not undergo cosmetic surgery as much as women, they are nonetheless highly self-conscious of anything that may affect their sense of manhood and masculinity. Excess male breast tissue ranks right up there, and can be quite psychologically and socially traumatizing. A male chest is meant to have firm pectoral muscles, not flabby breast tissue.

Gynecomastia is the abnormal development of female-like breast tissue in boys and men. It usually occurs around puberty, but can occur in all age groups, even in the elderly. Although the pre-puberty Gynecomastia (before age 16) usually resolves spontaneously, the adult type often requires treatment. The cosmetic aspect of Gynecomastia affects a patient's self-confidence and often limits their social and physical activity. Teenagers and men suffering from Gynecomastia often feel embarrassed, confused or scared. They may resort to crash diets, frantic exercise schedules, or just try to hide it with loose clothing. Before any of you male readers get too freaked out, you should know that Gynecomastia is a benign condition; it

is not cancer, and it is treatable.

Gynecomastia may affect one or both sides of the chest and can be present in different degrees, from a mild fullness under the nipple (puffy nipple Gynecomastia), to a severe form where full female breast-like tissue develops. The direct cause is an abnormal increase in the ratio of estrogen with respect to testosterone. So, either there is not enough testosterone or too much estrogen is being produced. Although many cases are idiopathic (of unknown cause), there are many known reasons for this condition, including but not limited to: prescribed medications, illegal drugs (e.g. marijuana), anabolic steroids, hormone-producing tumors, liver disease, alcoholism, and obesity.

Obesity happens to be one of the more common causes of Gynecomastia. Although just gaining weight can add an extra layer of fat on the chest area, the fatty tissue also produces the female hormone estrogen, which directly promotes breast tissue growth. While diet and exercise may help with losing the fat, once the breast tissue develops, it does not go away on its own by losing weight

or even with vigorous exercise.

Surgery remains the main treatment option for the most definitive results. Male breast reduction surgery is the fifth most commonly performed male cosmetic procedure and is becoming more and more popular.

Gynecomastia surgery (male breast reduction surgery) and chest sculpting involves a combination of liposuction and sometimes, gland removal. The chest skin usually shrinks and adapts back. The procedure is performed through very small incisions, with scars that are barely perceptible, and usually takes about one to two hours. In a few patients, a skin tightening and lifting may be necessary. Afterwards, you are asked to wear a compression shirt, and usually can resume normal daily activity in a few days.

Following the removal of the extra breast tissue, a more masculine chest contour is achieved and the sense of masculinity and self-confidence is restored!

*Dr. Babak Farzaneh, Farzaneh Cosmetic Surgery*

## Don't Starve Yourself To Look Good

Carrying a few extra pounds might be good for you; here are four reasons to stop stressing about your weight.

### **Extra pounds can mean extra years.**

Both skinny and obese people have higher risks of premature death than people who are considered "overweight". According to a study in the Journal of the American Medical Association, "overweight" means a body mass index (BMI) of 25 - 29.9. For a 5'6" woman, that's between 155 and 185 pounds. Calculate your own BMI at [www.nhlbisupport.com/bmi/](http://www.nhlbisupport.com/bmi/)

### **Dieting can be bad for your health.**

When scientists observed nearly 3,000 overweight Finnish twins, they saw that those who had previously dieted were more likely to die during the eighteen years of the study than those who simply maintained the same weight. Researchers suspect that yo-yo dieting can place so much stress on your body that it can outweigh the benefits of slimming down.

### **Men like curves.**

A woman is most attractive when her BMI is 21, according

to a recent study that asked people their perceptions of women of varying weights. That's not heavy - a BMI of 21 equals about 134 pounds for a 5'6" woman. However, that is bigger than most celebrities, whose BMIs often register under 18 (that's less than 116 pounds for a 5'6" woman). Women who weighed more than that ideal were considered to be less attractive, but super-skinny girls were rated lowest of all.

### **People like you better if you have curves than if you're ultra-thin.**

Very slender women can be perceived as annoying to anyone who is not so slim. The skinny girl can be a walking reminder of all our struggles with our own bodies. But, average-weight women (or even those slightly above their ideal weight) may be able to escape that type of negativity.

Make a decision to exercise and eat anything in moderation, and if you must, there is always a sensible solution to reach your goals! W