

TRANSGENDER SURGICAL PROGRAM

AT MGH

WELCOME

Table of Contents

Welcome.....	3
Who We Are	3
Required Steps	4
Checklist	5
Mastectomy Overview.....	6
What to expect–Mastectomy.....	7
Hospital Stay	7
Dressings and Wound Care	7
Movement and Use	7
Mental Health	7
Pain Control and Medication	8
Follow-up Routine Care.....	8
Smoking Cessation	8
Questions and Concerns.....	8

WELCOME

At the Massachusetts General Hospital, the Division of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery works with the Transgender Health Program to provide gender-affirming surgical care. Our program offers several gender-affirming surgical procedures, and the Transgender Health Program also offers primary care services and gender-affirming hormone therapy. We will work with you to develop a safe and comprehensive surgical plan that aligns with your goals. Please keep in mind that, depending on your procedure, the process can be lengthy. We ask for your patience while we work with you to ensure that, together, we complete all pre-operative and insurance-related requirements. You can contact the MGH Transgender Health Program at 617-643-7210. If you have questions regarding the surgical process, you may talk to us on the phone or send us a message via patient gateway. We will help you navigate through this process and look forward to meeting and working with you!

WHO WE ARE

Clinical Staff

Leah, RN – Dedicated Gender-Affirming Surgery Program Surgical Nurse

Candace Nguyen – Surgical Program Coordinator

Heather Parker, NP – Nurse Practitioner with Plastics and Reconstructive Surgery

Surgeons

William “Jay” Austen, Jr. MD, FACS - Top Surgery

Branko Bojovic, MD - Facial Feminization, Facial Masculinization

Eric Fjeld – Scheduler for Dr. Bojovic

Curtis Cetrulo, MD - Phalloplasty, Metoidioplasty, Top Surgery

Ariella Bernkopf – Scheduler for Dr. Cetrulo

Richard Ehrlichman, MD - Top Surgery

Mary Little – Scheduler for Dr. Ehrlichman

Milena Weinstein, MD –Vaginoplasty, Vaginectomy, Hysterectomy

Jonathan Winograd, MD - Vaginoplasty, Top surgery

Jenn McGonagle – Scheduler for Dr. Winograd

Anton Wintner, MD – Phalloplasty, Orchiectomy, Vaginoplasty

REQUIRED STEPS

1. Letters of Support

Before proceeding with a surgical consult, we need two letters of support written by licensed behavioral health providers (Therapists, social workers, psychiatrists, psychologists, etc.) to be on file per WPATH standards of care and insurance requirements. You can fax us your letters at 617-724-7126 or email them to us at MGHTransHealth@mgh.harvard.edu. If you have patient gateway, you can also send letters to us that way. If your letter-writers have any questions about writing these letters, let us know – we can make sure the letters will meet all requirements. Please also let us know if you need help finding a provider to write a letter for you – we may be able to help.

2. Surgical Consultation

Once a Transgender Health Program provider has determined you're ready for a surgical consultation and we've received your letter(s) of support, the Transgender Health Program will refer you to the surgeons' office. Then they will reach out to schedule an appointment. You will likely meet with multiple surgeons, including from Urology and Gynecology.

3. Schedule Surgery Date

Once you and your surgical team have developed a safe surgical plan that aligns with your goals and you've completed all other requirements, it is time to schedule an OR date! It is important to note that due to the complexity of this type of surgery, we will ensure you are medically stable and the whole team agrees with a safe and detailed plan before proceeding with surgery.

CHECKLIST

- ☐ One letter of support from mental health providers on file
(#1 __/__/____)
- ☐ Once confirmed, surgical consult (__/__/____)
- ☐ Schedule surgery date
- ☐ Pre-operative phone call and COVID test (__/__/____)
- ☐ Surgery! (__/__/____)
- ☐ Post-operative visit with the surgical team (__/__/____)

MASTECTOMY OVERVIEW

Mastectomy is the surgical removal of breast tissue. During the procedure, the surgeon will remove all the breast tissue, milk ducts, and excess skin to alter the shape and size of the chest's skin and change the location of the nipple or areola. There are several procedures that your surgeon can perform to achieve a more masculine chest. You and your surgeon will determine which type of mastectomy will be best to achieve your desired outcome. The surgery typically lasts for 1-2 hours and is done in one stage under general anesthesia. You will typically only stay in the hospital for a few hours after surgery, provided you are medically ready to return home. It will be important to have someone at home with you the first few weeks after recovery to assist you with household chores and personal care. This packet includes general post-operative instructions to give you an idea of what to expect, but please remember to always listen to your surgeon's specific instructions.

WHAT TO EXPECT—MASTECTOMY

Hospital Stay

- You will remain in the hospital for 1-2 days following surgery.
- Postoperatively, you will have drains in place. Your care team will teach you how to empty and record your drain output.
- Before discharge, your care team will prescribe oral pain medication to manage your pain.

Dressings and Wound Care

- You will have light gauze and dressing pads covering your incisions.
- You will likely have drains in place for several 1-2 weeks after surgery.
- You may have sutures that a provider will need to remove in the office.
- Take care to keep incisions as clean and dry as possible. After showering, pat your incisions dry or allow them to air dry.

Movement and Use

- No heavy lifting or strenuous activities for six weeks.
- Walking is encouraged and should be started once you get home.
- Walk for 10 minutes four times a day, even if it's just up and down the hallway. Listen to your body and your pain level.
- For the first few weeks, you may walk slightly hunched over with a shuffling gait, which will improve with time.
- You will need to take some time off of work for recovery, depending on what level of physical activity your job involves.

Mental Health

- It is difficult to predict the way that surgery will affect an individual's mental health.
- It can take time for you to adjust to your new body after surgery, which may lead to some emotional distress and confusing feelings.
- It is important to have a support system in place, consisting of people who are aware that you are undergoing surgery, including any mental health providers you may be working with.
- If you experience a decline in your mental health or any emotional distress throughout the process, please let your surgeon know.

MGH Transgender Surgical Program

Mastectomy

Pain Control and Medication

- You will likely be prescribed pain medications. Take them as needed for pain. As your pain decreases, you will be able to reduce the use of the narcotic pain medication and control pain with Tylenol only. Do not exceed 4 grams of Tylenol daily.
- Narcotic medications often make people constipated. Please take a stool softener (Colace) while taking narcotic medications. You may also use other over-the-counter stool softeners.
- Do not drive or operate machinery while taking prescription pain medication.
- Unless approved by your surgeons, do not take Ibuprofen, Aspirin, Aleve, Naproxen, or Motrin for two weeks after surgery, as it may lead to bleeding.
- If you have drains in place, your surgeons will prescribe an oral antibiotic. Please complete the entire course of prescribed antibiotics.

Follow-up Routine Care

- We will see you in the plastic surgery clinic for your follow-up appointment within one week after your surgery.
- During this appointment, your care team will check your incisions and remove any drains and sutures.

Smoking Cessation

- Nicotine and cigarette smoking interfere with wound healing. Secondhand smoke exposure also exposes you to nicotine. Therefore, we highly recommended that you remain nicotine/smoke-free for six months after surgery.

Questions and Concerns

- If you experience fever greater than 100.4 degrees, inability to keep down fluids for >24 hours, foul-smelling drainage from your wounds, uncontrollable pain, or any other concerning symptoms, call our office at 617-726-1915.
- If it is an evening or weekend, call our office at 617-726-2000 and ask to speak with the on-call Plastic Surgery resident.
- If you are unable to reach us, please come to Massachusetts General Hospital Emergency Room if feasible otherwise, please go to your nearest hospital.