

# WELCOME



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Thank you for your interest in learning more about chest reconstruction surgery at Boston Medical Center (BMC).

We strongly suggest that you sign up for MyChart. This gives you direct online access to portions of your electronic medical record, including details of past or upcoming appointments and appointment reminders. You will also have the ability to connect with your care team to ask non urgent medical questions. Please visit [mychart.bmc.org](https://mychart.bmc.org) to create an account.

Sincerely,

The Center for Transgender Medicine and Surgery Team (CTMS)

**Phone: 617.638.1833**

**Fax: 617.414.7158**



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# SURGICAL OVERVIEW

## CHEST RECONSTRUCTION

The goal of chest reconstruction surgery is to decrease chest volume and improve overall contour of chest wall in order to alleviate gender dysphoria, match gender identity to presentation, and improve confidence and self-esteem.

This surgery includes the removal of most of the breast tissue, removal of excess chest wall skin, elimination of the inframammary fold and reduction and repositioning of the nipple-areolar complex.

There are two main types of chest reconstruction procedures. These include circumareolar/periareolar technique and double incision with free nipple grafts. The appropriate method will be determined at the time of your consultation and depends mostly on chest size/volume and skin elasticity/redundancy.

Circumareolar/periareolar chest reconstruction refers to an incision only around the nipple-areolar complex. The advantages include less obvious scar and the possibility of retained nipple sensation. The disadvantages include possible remaining chest fullness and nipple spread and widening and need for revisions. It is important to note that not all patients will qualify for this technique.

Chest reconstruction with free nipple grafts refers to the removal of tissue through a lower chest incision which allows tightening of excess skin, with repositioning of the nipple as a “skin graft.” The advantages of this method include: more predictable flat chest appearance, improved nipple-areolar size and positioning and overall better chest contour. The disadvantages include loss of nipple sensation and pigment, possible loss of the nipple-areola and more obvious scarring.

Chest reconstruction is done under general anesthesia, and takes approximately two to three hours. Your chest will be covered in bandages or specialized dressing connected to a vacuum pump. You will have two plastic tubes (drains) draining excess fluid. You will also be fitted into a compression vest during surgery that should remain in place until your follow up visit. You will be discharged home on the day of surgery.

Revision surgery may need to be done to address "dog ears", which refers to redundant skin, reduction and/or repositioning of nipple/areola, asymmetry, or unsightly scars. It is important to note that revisions may be considered cosmetic and may not be covered by insurance.

Note that insurance companies refer to this surgery as "mastectomy." Also, it is important to know that this type of surgery does not remove all breast tissue and it is still important to perform self-chest exams and get clinical chest exams with your primary care provider.

#### Reference

Adapted from <https://www.ftmsurgery.net/top-surgery/>

# THE STEPS

Due to the complexity and permanence of surgery, we have specific requirements in place to ensure your safety and that will allow us to provide the best possible care. Below is a list of the main requirements and steps a patient will need to complete prior to surgery.

## 1 REQUESTS & DOCUMENTATION

Prior to your consultation we will require documentation from your primary care provider and behavioral health provider.

- Please see page 4 and 5 for details.

Please submit clinical documentation including medical clearance from your endocrinologist (if applicable).

\*Consultation for Chest Reconstruction cannot be scheduled without all of the above mentioned documentation.

## 2 CONSULTATION

First-time consult appointment with our plastic surgery team

- The purpose of this consult is to provide patients with an opportunity to clarify any questions regarding surgery, insurance coverage, etc
- Any medical issues preventing surgery will be discussed and recommendations will be made

## 3 PRIOR AUTHORIZATION

The CTMS team is responsible for submitting for prior authorization. Surgical dates are not finalized until insurance authorization is obtained.

# PRIMARY CARE PROVIDERS

**Primary Care Providers (PCP) should send in a request for a consultation. The request should include the following information in the form of a letter or as part of a clinical note:**

- PCP's full support for patient to undergo this surgery
- Current medication list
- Current problem list
- Current allergy list
- Length of time the patient has taken supervised hormone therapy (should be for at least 12 months, unless this is medically contraindicated)
- Length of time of the PCP/patient relationship and date of most recent PCP visit (should be within 12 months)

**Consult requests and patient information may be sent to us via email, fax or mail:**

**FAX: 617.414.7158**

- Cover letter for fax should be addressed to: Center for Transgender Medicine and Surgery

**MAIL: Boston Medical Center**

Center for Transgender Medicine and Surgery  
Preston Building, 3rd Floor, Room 3031  
732 Harrison Avenue, Boston, MA 02118

**EMAIL: [transgender.center@bmc.org](mailto:transgender.center@bmc.org)**

You may also download a copy of this guideline from our website at: [www.bmc.org/center-transgender-medicine-and-surgery](http://www.bmc.org/center-transgender-medicine-and-surgery).

**For internal referrals, you may use the Epic system and submit to department specialty: Ambulatory Referral to the Center for Transgender Medicine and Surgery.**

Please don't hesitate to contact us with questions.

# BEHAVIORAL HEALTH PROVIDERS

Patients need one support letter from a licensed Behavioral Health professional. The letter must meet the requirements of the health insurance carrier as well as those listed below. Where these requirements differ, the more stringent requirements must be followed and documented in the letter. For the most up-to-date requirements, patients should review their personal benefit plan or call their insurance company. The letter should include the following information:

- The patient's general identifying characteristics and information, including date of birth
- The BH clinician's experience with treating transgender patients
- The duration of the BH provider's professional relationship with the patient, including the type and duration of evaluation and therapy or counseling to date
- Results of any psychosocial assessment including any diagnoses
- A description of how the criteria for surgery have been met
- Identify support systems, any progress made in transition socially or medically
- Any BH diagnosis or concerns and how they are being managed
- Contact information for the BH provider and a statement that this provider is available for coordination of care

**The support letter should be addressed to "Boston Medical Center Surgeon" and sent to us via one of the following ways:**

**Preferable, FAX to: 617.414.7158**

Cover letter for fax should be addressed to: Center for Transgender Medicine and Surgery

**MAIL: Boston Medical Center**

Center for Transgender Medicine and Surgery  
Preston Building, 3rd Floor, Room 3031  
732 Harrison Avenue, Boston, MA 02118

**EMAIL: [transgender.center@bmc.org](mailto:transgender.center@bmc.org)**

You may also download a copy of this guideline from our website at: [www.bmc.org/center-transgender-medicine-and-surgery](http://www.bmc.org/center-transgender-medicine-and-surgery).

Please don't hesitate to contact us with questions.



# CONTACT

For detailed information about services please email us at  
[transgender.center@bmc.org](mailto:transgender.center@bmc.org)

Micha Martin LCSW, Project Manager.....	617-638-1833
Peer Navigator.....	617-638-1833
Pam Klein RN, Nurse Liaison.....	617-638-1827
Brenna Cyr LICSW, Behavioral Health Lead.....	617-638-8133
Urology.....	617-638-8485
Plastic Surgery.....	617-638-8419 Option #1

# INSURANCE

Insurance coverage and benefits are specific to each individual's benefit plan. Not all insurance coverage is the same even within the same insurance company (Blue Cross, Aetna, Tufts, etc.).

For information about your coverage benefits, call the member services phone number listed on your insurance care to ask about coverage for the specific services you need. You have the right to request a copy of your medical policy for any gender affirmation medical treatments.

**If you have additional questions regarding insurance, call and ask for an appointment with Patient Financial Services at 617.414.5155.**

