

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT CARE OF THE TRANSGENDER PATIENT

In the Clinic
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What does it mean to be transgender?

Being transgender means that your gender identity differs from the sex recorded on your birth certificate. Gender identity is an internal sense of being male, female, or neither. Other common terms for this include "gender nonbinary," "gender incongruent," or "genderqueer."

Do transgender persons have special health considerations?

As a transgender man or woman, you may face challenges in accessing high-quality health care. It may be hard to find a provider who knows about transgender health issues and feels comfortable providing culturally sensitive care.

Transgender persons are at higher risk for:

- Substance abuse
- Anxiety, depression, and suicide
- Certain types of cancer
- Infections

What is gender transition?

Transitioning is the process of making physical traits match gender identity, which may occur through clothing, hairstyle, or actions and mannerisms. Some transgender persons have medical treatment to make their physical appearance match their gender identity.

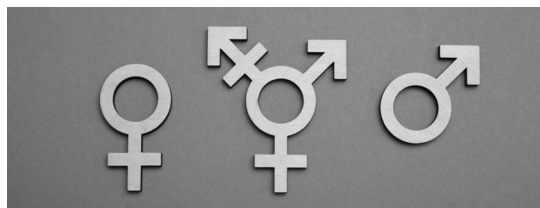
What can I expect when talking to my health care provider about my gender identity?

Maybe you feel confident in your gender identity and know which steps you want to take next. Or, maybe you feel clear about your gender identity but less sure about what, if any, medical intervention you want to align your gender identity and appearance.

Either way, it is important to find a trusted health care provider who can help you manage what comes next. During your first visit, your provider will:

- Take a detailed medical history
- Ask questions to find out how long your gender identity has differed from the sex recorded on your original birth certificate
- Assess your ability to make medical decisions

Transgender persons often have mental health issues, such as depression and anxiety. If your primary care provider believes you would benefit from seeing a mental health professional, they will refer you to one.



What medical options are available to transgender persons?

Hormone therapy is often the first approach. It can be used on its own or before surgical interventions. Talk to your health care provider about the risks and benefits of hormone therapy and the time frame of expected changes.

What are the risks and considerations of hormone therapy?

Hormone therapy is generally safe when it is medically supervised. Your provider will monitor you regularly during the first year and periodically thereafter. Let your provider know if you have any serious adverse effects, including mood changes.

What surgical options are available to transgender persons?

Surgical options for transgender men include:

- Chest reconstruction surgery
- Removal of the ovaries and/or uterus
- Genital reconstruction surgery

Surgical options for transgender women include:

- Surgery to make the face appear more feminine
- Breast augmentation
- Removal of 1 or both testicles
- Genital reconstruction surgery

Surgical interventions have risks. Talk to your provider about finding a surgeon who specializes in transgender-specific surgery and any preoperative and postoperative considerations.

Questions for My Doctor

- Do you have experience caring for transgender patients?
- Are transgender medical and surgical interventions covered by my insurance?
- What are the risks and benefits of hormone therapy?
- When will I start to see changes in my body after starting hormone therapy?
- I would like to have children one day. How can I preserve my fertility?

For More Information



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Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
www.cdc.gov/lgbthealth/transgender.htm

National LGBT Health Education Center
www.lgbthealtheducation.org/topic/transgender-health