

Health News Digest Winning the Battle Against Man Boobs



(HealthNewsDigest.com) - Man boobs, also called "moobs," can have devastating results on a guy's confidence, at the beach, in the locker room, and also in the bedroom.

The condition known as male breast enlargement (gynecomastia) often appears during adolescence and has profound effects on a teen's self esteem and quality of life, even if the condition is considered relatively mild, according to new research in the April issue of *Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery*.

It is also more common than you might think, although it doesn't often get talked about in mixed company. About half of all men have excess localized fat and/or excess glandular tissue in one or both breasts. Gynecomastia accounts for more than 65 percent of all male breast disorders, according to the American Society of Plastic Surgeons (ASPS).

Why do men get this condition? Male breast enlargement is usually the result of a hormonal imbalance, but certain medications can also cause gynecomastia, such as the use of anabolic steroids. Heredity can also play a role, and it can also occur due to testicular tumors that can cause estrogen production to

significantly increase.

Being overweight can be a factor because male breasts (like women's) are composed of fatty tissue that accumulates over the pectoral muscles. But male breast enlargement is not a direct result of excess weight, and losing weight doesn't always correct the problem. Gynecomastia sometimes resolves on its own, but it can persist in about eight percent of teenage boys.

New Study Documents Emotional Toll of Male Breast Enlargement

In the new study, boys with gynecomastia had lower scores for general health, social functioning and mental health even after the researchers controlled for their weight. They also had lower scores for physical health, but this was attributed to being overweight. Boys with gynecomastia scored higher on a test about their attitudes toward food and eating, however there was no difference in the rate of eating disorders seen among boys with gynecomastia and their counterparts who did not have enlarged breasts.

"Merely having gynecomastia was sufficient to cause significant deficits in general health, social functioning, mental health, self-esteem, and eating behaviors and attitudes compared with controls," conclude study authors who were led by Brian I. Labow, MD, a plastic surgeon at Boston Children's Hospital. "As a result, early intervention and treatment for gynecomastia may be necessary to improve the negative physical and emotional symptoms."

Surgery is the only treatment for male breast enlargement, and it is often considered a cure. More adolescents are seeking surgery to correct gynecomastia. Since 2007, rates male breast reduction has increased by more than 103%, according to the latest statistics from the American Society for Aesthetic Plastic Surgery (ASAPS).

The reason that surgery is becoming more common is because gynecomastia is no longer a taboo subject, says New York City plastic surgeon Elliot Jacobs, MD, the author of *Mantalk, Tips from the Pros for Great Looks, Good Health and Maintaining Your Competitive Edge (MDPublish)*. In addition, the surgery has greatly improved over time and is now considered a simple outpatient procedure. Today, male breast reduction involves liposuction and/or surgery. The fatty tissue can be removed with most variations of liposuction to minimize visible scars, while the glandular component usually requires direct excision.

"Gynecomastia in an adolescent is both a physical and psychological problem and appropriate treatment can literally and physically 'lift a weight off a boy's chest,'" says Jacobs. Surgery can be considered for adolescent boys aged 12 to 18 after careful and regular evaluations.

Male breast reduction can change the course of an adolescent male's childhood and teen years. "This is a vulnerable time of life, and a formative one as well," Jacobs says. "Being teased or even bullied and feeling ashamed can have lasting consequences."

But it doesn't have to be like this. The procedure is safe and straightforward when performed by an experienced, board-certified plastic surgeon. To locate a board certified plastic surgeon near you, visit <http://www.surgery.org> or <http://www.plasticsurgery.org>.