



ASAN

AUTISTIC SELF ADVOCACY NETWORK



Burton Blatt Institute
SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY



Developmental
Disabilities
Planning Council

Easy Read Edition

A Self-Advocate's Guide to Gender- Affirming Health Care

Part 3: What is gender-affirming health care? What are the different types of gender-affirming health care?

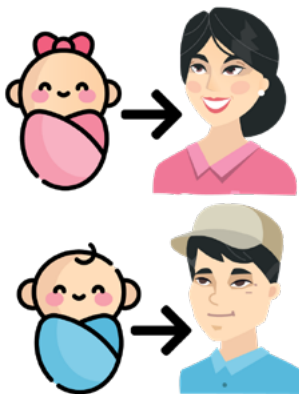
What is gender-affirming health care? What are the different types of gender-affirming health care?



Some transgender and nonbinary people get gender affirming health care.



Gender-affirming health care is health care that helps people feel more comfortable in their bodies.



Cisgender people can also get gender affirming health care.



In this resource we will not talk about gender affirming health care for cisgender people.



In this resource, we will talk about gender affirming health care for transgender and nonbinary people.



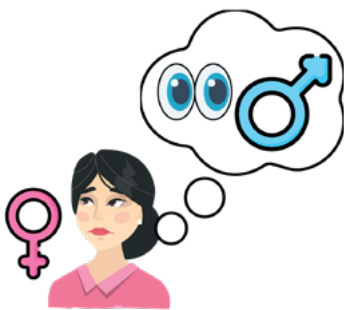
Gender-affirming health care can help with gender dysphoria.



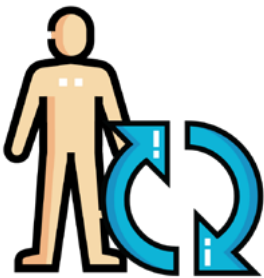
Gender dysphoria is when someone feels like their body and their gender do not match.



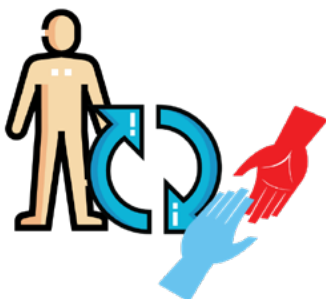
Gender dysphoria happens when someone is upset by how their body and gender do not match.



Sometimes someone feels like other people see their body as a different gender than what they are. This can also cause gender dysphoria.



People treat gender dysphoria by making changes to their body or to how they look.



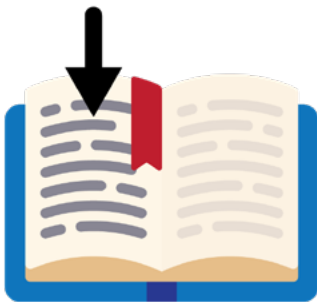
Gender affirming health care is health care that helps transgender and nonbinary people change how their bodies look.



Gender-affirming health care can mean taking hormones.

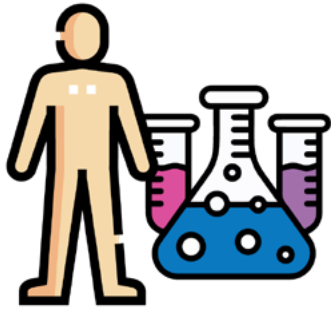


Gender-affirming health care can mean getting surgery.

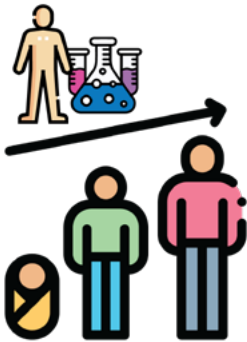


We will talk about both these things in this section.

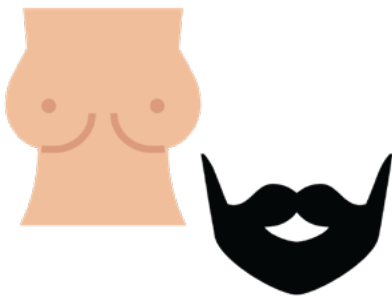
Sex Hormones and Hormone Blockers



Sex hormones are chemicals in your body.

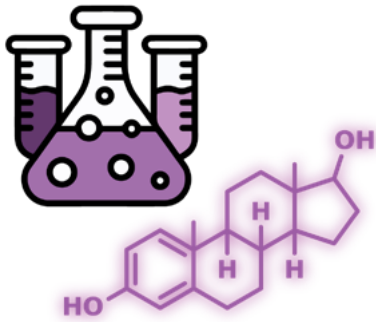


Sex hormones affect how your body grows up and changes.

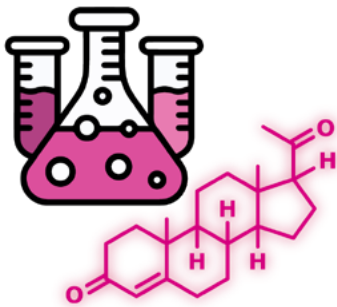


Sex hormones can affect things like whether you grow breasts or whether you have facial hair.

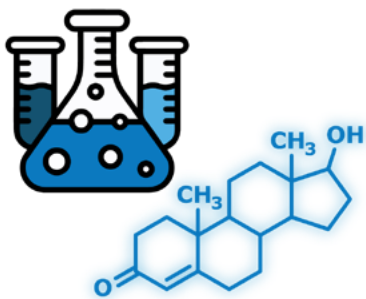
There are three main sex hormones we will talk about:



- Estrogen



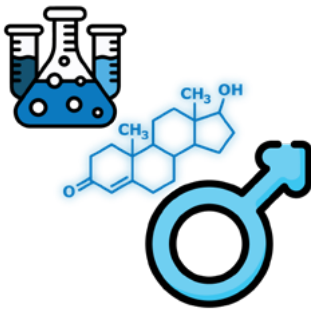
- Progesterone



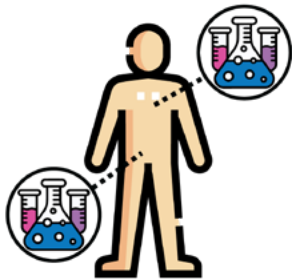
- Testosterone



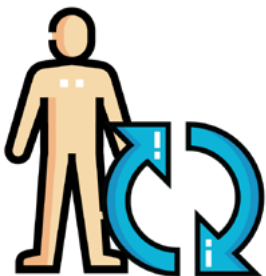
Estrogen and progesterone are **feminizing sex hormones**. This means that they can make your body look more like a typical female body.



Testosterone is a **masculinizing sex hormone**. This means that it can make your body look more like a typical male body.



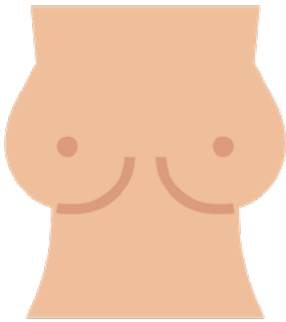
Most people naturally produce sex hormones in their bodies.



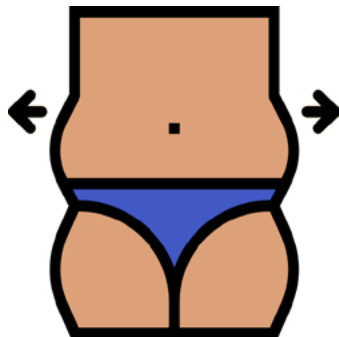
Sex hormones change how people look.



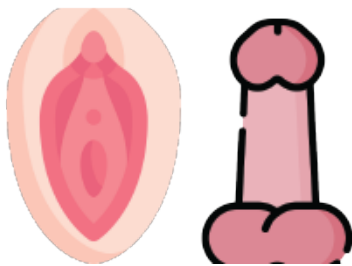
Sex hormones are what make some people grow facial hair.



Sex hormones make some people grow breasts.



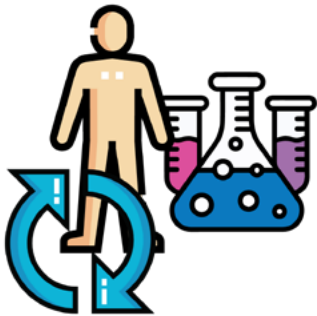
Sex hormones change where fat goes on people's bodies.



Sex hormones change how people's genitals grow.



Many people do not think about the changes sex hormones make to their body.



But some transgender and nonbinary people want to change how sex hormones change their bodies.



These transgender and nonbinary people may take hormones to change how their body looks.



When someone takes hormones to change how their body looks, it is called **hormone replacement therapy**.

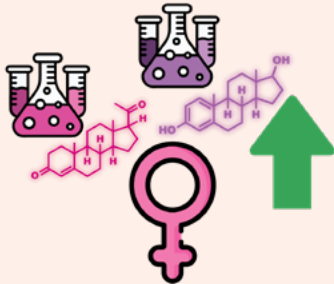
For example:



Ella is a transgender woman.



Ella wants her body to look more female.



Ella wants her body to have more feminizing hormones.



So Ella takes estrogen and progesterone.



Estrogen and progesterone are feminizing hormones.

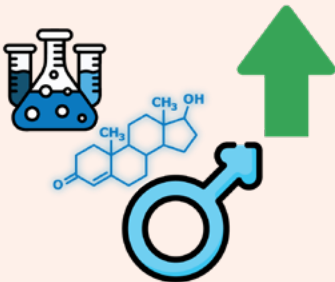
Here is another example:



Yakob is a transgender man.



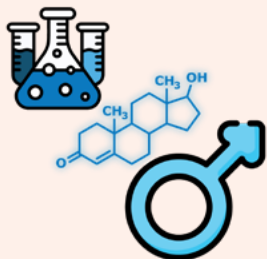
Yakob wants his body to look more male.



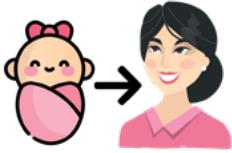
Yakob wants his body to have more masculinizing hormones.



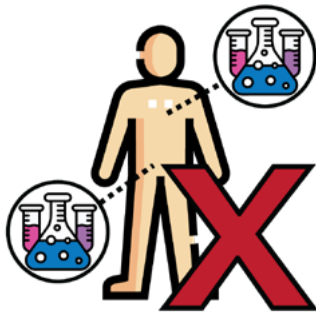
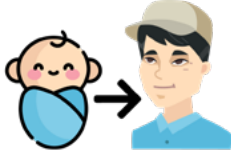
So Yakob takes testosterone.



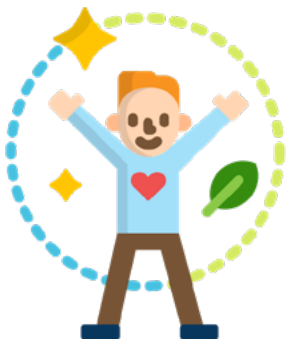
Testosterone is a masculinizing hormone.



Note: Some cisgender people take hormone replacement therapy as well.



For example, some cisgender people who have certain kinds of surgery cannot make sex hormones naturally anymore.



If someone's body cannot make sex hormones naturally, they need to take hormone replacement therapy to stay healthy.



Some cisgender people also take hormone replacement therapy when they get older to help with changes to their bodies.



In this toolkit, we will not talk about hormone replacement therapy for cisgender people.

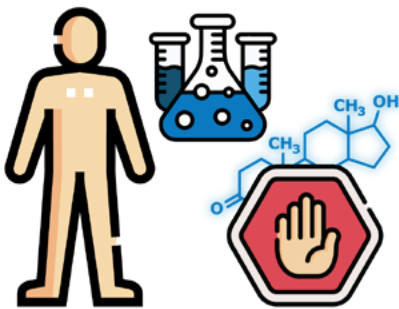


We will only talk about hormone replacement therapy for transgender and nonbinary people.

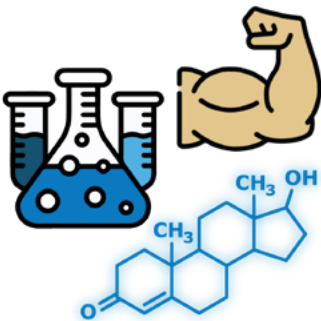
Testosterone Blockers



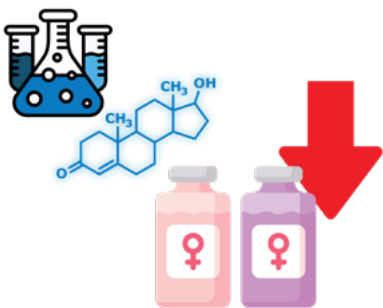
Most people who take feminizing hormones need to take a **testosterone blocker** as well.



A testosterone blocker is a medication that stops your body from making testosterone.



Testosterone is a very strong hormone.



If you take feminizing hormones but your body is still making testosterone, the feminizing hormones might not work as well.



So taking a testosterone blocker helps feminizing hormones work their best.

For example:



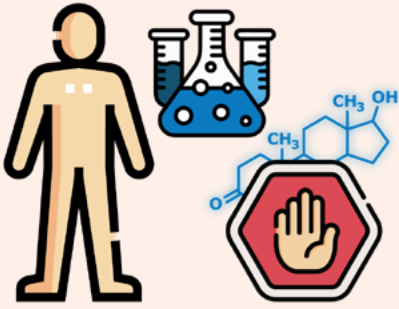
Ella is a transgender woman.



Ella takes feminizing hormones.



Ella also takes a testosterone blocker.



This is a medication that stops her body from making testosterone.



The testosterone blocker helps the feminizing hormones work best.



Puberty Blockers

Everyone goes through puberty.



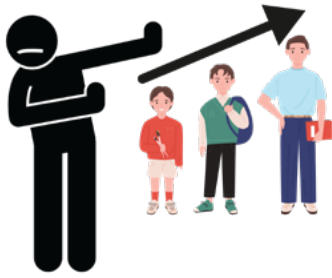
Puberty is a time when your body changes.



Your body starts to look less like a child's body and more like an adult's body.

8-14

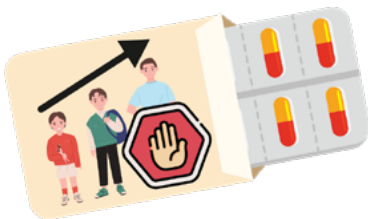
Most people start puberty between the ages of 8 years old and 14 years old.



Some transgender and nonbinary children who have not yet gone through puberty do not want to go through puberty yet.



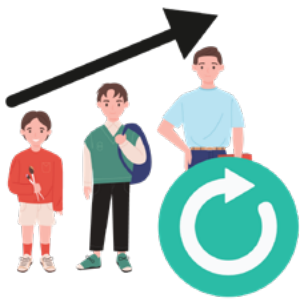
They want to put off puberty until they are old enough to take hormone replacement therapy.



These children can take **puberty blockers**.



Puberty blockers are medications that stop puberty as long as a person keeps taking them.



Once a person stops taking puberty blockers, they can go through puberty again.

For example:



Sean is a trans boy.



Sean is eleven years old.



He is starting to go through puberty.



If Sean goes through puberty now he will grow breasts.



Sean does not want to grow breasts.



Sean wants to wait to go through puberty.



Sean wants to have hormone replacement therapy when he is older.



Sean takes puberty blockers.



Puberty blockers let Sean wait to start puberty.

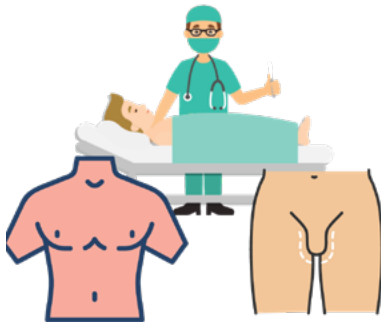
Surgeries



Some transgender and nonbinary people get surgery to make their bodies look more like they want.



There are different types of surgeries transgender and nonbinary people can get.



We will talk about some of the most common types here.



In this section we talk about sexual body parts.



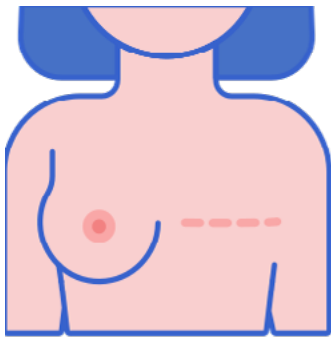
To learn more about sexual body parts read our other resource [“Sex Education: We’ve Got the Right to Know!”](#)

Top Surgery

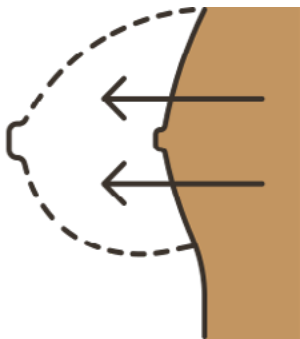


Top surgeries are surgeries that happen on the upper half of your body.

There are two main types of top surgery:



- Mastectomy

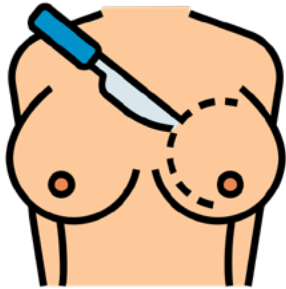


- Mammoplasty

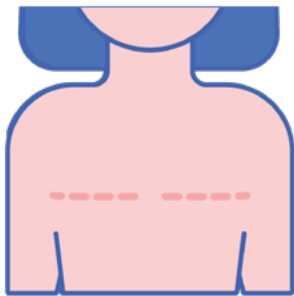
HELLO, I'M
**masculinizing
top surgery**

Mastectomy

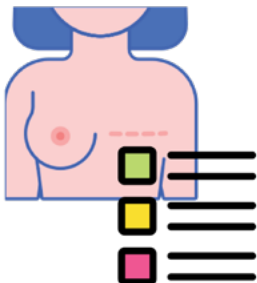
Mastectomy is also called masculinizing top surgery.



Mastectomy is surgery to remove a person's breasts.



After mastectomy, a person's chest is flat.



There are different types of mastectomy a person can get.

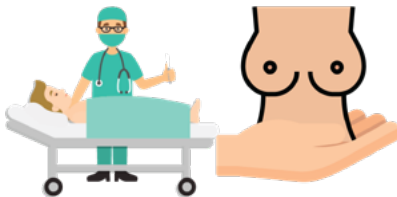


There are doctors who specialize in doing mastectomies for transgender people.

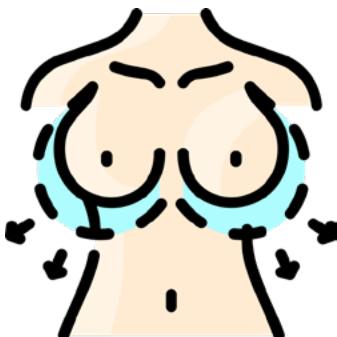
HELLO, I'M
feminizing
top surgery

Mammoplasty

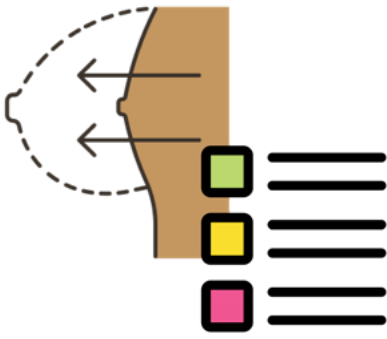
Mammoplasty is also called feminizing top surgery.



Mammoplasty is surgery to give someone breasts.



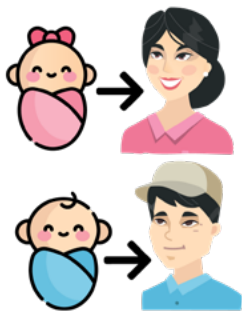
Or, if someone already has breasts, mammoplasty can make their breasts larger.



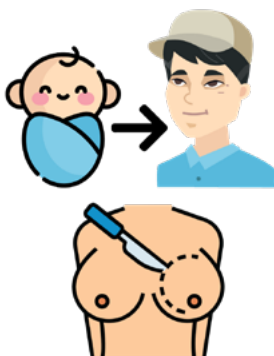
There are different types of mammoplasty a person can get.



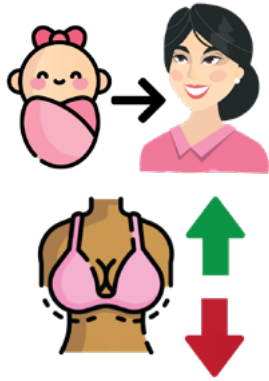
There are doctors who specialize in doing mammoplasties for transgender people.



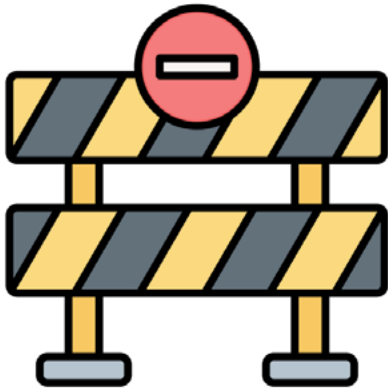
Cisgender people may also get top surgery.



Sometimes cisgender men grow breast tissue and will have it removed.



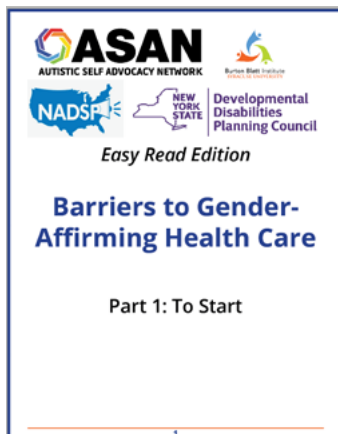
Sometimes cisgender women want to make their breast size bigger or smaller.



Cisgender people do not usually face the same barriers to getting top surgery that transgender people do.



Transgender people often have to show a lot more “proof” they are ready for top surgery than cisgender people do.



We will talk more about this in our other resource [“Barriers to Gender-Affirming Health Care.”](#)

Bottom Surgery

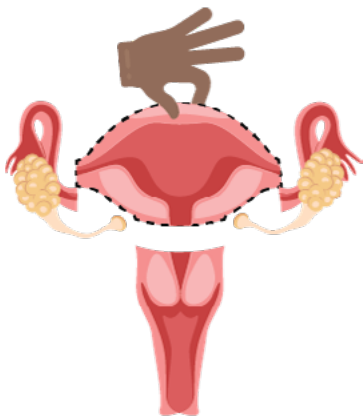


Bottom surgeries are surgeries that happen on the lower half of your body.



There are two kinds of bottom surgeries: removal of reproductive body parts and genital surgeries.

Removal of reproductive body parts



These are surgeries that remove the body parts that let someone get pregnant or get someone else pregnant.



After these surgeries, a person cannot get pregnant or get someone else pregnant.

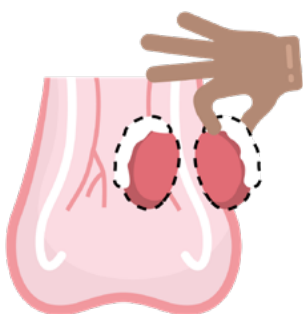
There are three main types of these surgeries:



- Hysterectomy



- Salpingo-oophorectomy

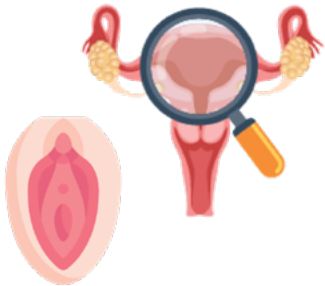


- Orchiectomy

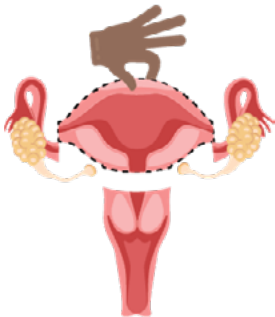
Hysterectomy



Hysterectomy is a kind of surgery that people with a uterus can get.



(Remember, most people with vaginas have a uterus.)

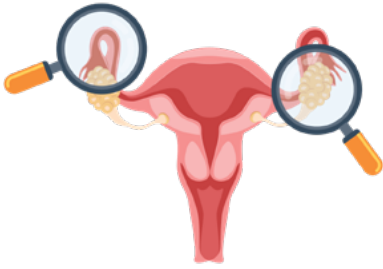


Hysterectomy is when a doctor removes the uterus completely.

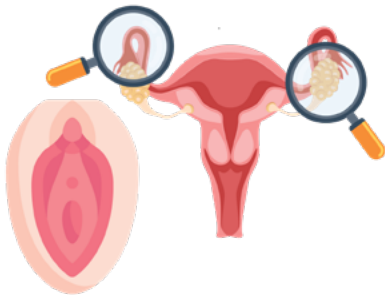


After a hysterectomy, a person cannot get pregnant.

Salpingo-oophorectomy



Salpingo-oophorectomy is a kind of surgery that people with Fallopian tubes and ovaries can get.



(Remember, most people with vaginas have Fallopian tubes and ovaries.)

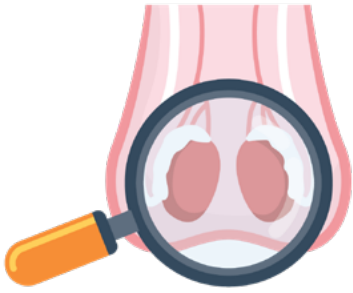


Salpingo-oophorectomy is when a doctor removes the Fallopian tubes and ovaries completely.

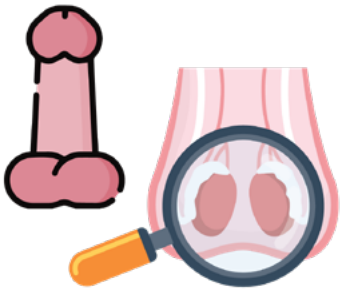


After a salpingo-oophorectomy, a person cannot get pregnant.

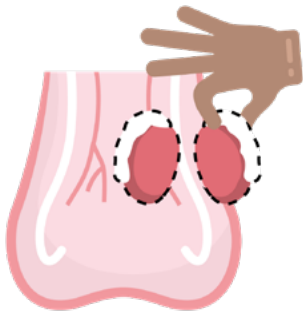
Orchiectomy



Orchiectomy is a kind of surgery that people with testicles can get.



(Remember, most people with penises have testicles.)



Orchiectomy is when a doctor completely removes the testicles.

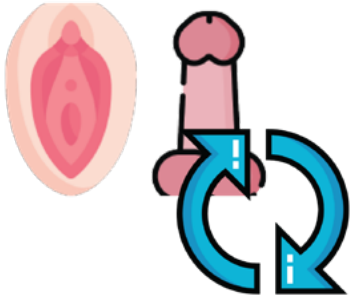


After an orchiectomy, a person cannot get someone else pregnant.



If someone is taking testosterone blockers, after an orchiectomy they will not need testosterone blockers anymore.

Genital surgeries



These are surgeries that change how a person's genitals look.

There are two main types of genital surgery:



- Vaginoplasty



- Phalloplasty/metoidioplasty

Vaginoplasty



Vaginoplasty is a kind of surgery that makes a vagina.

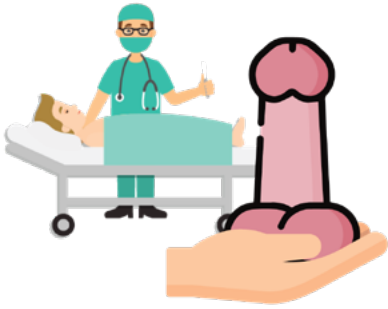


There are different ways surgeons do vaginoplasty.

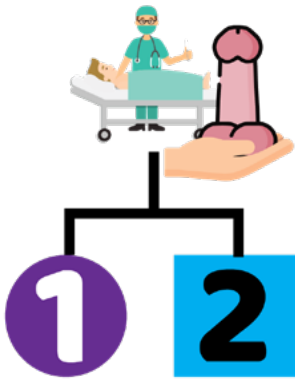


After vaginoplasty, a person has a vagina but cannot get pregnant.

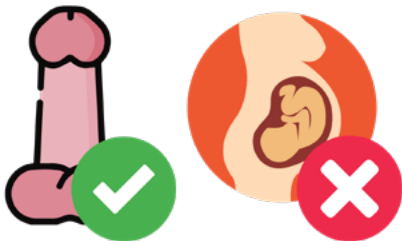
Phalloplasty/metoidioplasty



Phalloplasty and metoidioplasty are kinds of surgeries that make a penis.



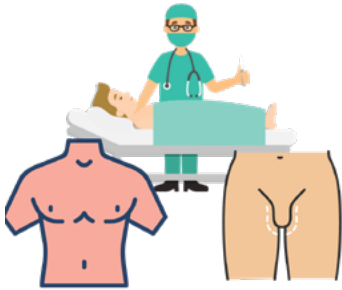
Phalloplasty and metoidioplasty are different kinds of surgeries.



After phalloplasty or metoidioplasty, a person has a penis but cannot get someone pregnant.



These are not the only kinds of gender-affirming surgeries there are.



But these are some of the most common surgeries.

Choices around Hormones and Surgery



Transgender and nonbinary people can make different choices around hormones and surgery.



Not everyone wants to go on hormones or have surgery.



Some people have illnesses or disabilities that stop them from going on hormones or having surgery.



Some people cannot afford to go on hormones or have surgery.



All transgender and nonbinary people are valid.



A transgender or nonbinary person does not have to take hormones to be “really” transgender or nonbinary.



A transgender or nonbinary person does not have to have surgery in order to be “really” transgender or nonbinary.