

# Gynecomastia - Normal

## Definition

- The presence of some breast tissue swelling in a teenage male

## Health Information

### Symptoms of Normal Male Breast Buds

- Male breast buds occur in about 50% of all teenage males.
- Breast buds are small disc-shaped rubbery lumps felt under the nipple. Most often less than 1 inch (2.5 cm) across.
- Breast buds may just start on one side. The lump will also appear on the other side within 3 months.
- Often, the lump is tender to the touch.
- Peak age of onset is 12 to 14 years of age.

### Symptoms of Normal Male Breast Swelling (Gynecomastia)

- The breast tissue around the breast buds can also become swollen.
- At first, it looks like large chest muscles in a male.
- If it enlarges, it can resemble small female breasts.
- Gynecomastia occurs in less than 10% of males who get breast buds.

### Cause

- Normal changes in the levels of sex hormones during puberty is the most common cause.
- Rarely, breast tissue swelling can be a side effect of some prescription medicines or herbal products.
- Street drugs (such as marijuana) can also be a cause.
- Rarely, is it caused by contact with skin creams that contains plant hormones, such as lavender oil.

### Diagnosis

- Breast buds in a male who has entered puberty are always normal. No need to see your doctor.
- Gynecomastia (some breast tissue) is also often part of normal puberty.
- If your son has not been examined by your doctor for gynecomastia, make an appointment to check for any other causes. Be sure he is not on any skin products that could cause breast tissue swelling.

## Care Advice

### 1. Overview:

- Male breast buds are a normal part of puberty. Occur in about half of teenage males.
- Male breast tissue (gynecomastia) also can be a normal part of puberty. Occurs in less than 10% of teenage males.
- Both are temporary changes.

### 2. Reassure Your Son:

- Tell him this is a normal part of puberty
- These lumps are caused by rapid growth. It means he is changing into a man very quickly.
- They have nothing to do with cancer.
- They will not turn into female breasts.

3. **Treatment:**

- No treatment is needed in most boys.
- For any flareups of painful nipples, pain medicine for a few days will help.
- If embarrassed, wear loose fitting shirts rather than tight ones.

4. **What to Expect:**

- The breast changes are temporary.
- They will go away in 1-3 years on their own without any treatment.

5. **Breast Enlargement in Overweight Teens:**

- The swelling is caused by extra fat deposits in the chest wall.
- This condition is very common.
- The main clue is the swelling feels soft, like fat. Breast tissue feels firm. Also, the nipple does not have a firm breast bud under it.
- Treatment requires losing weight.

## Call Your Doctor If

- Breast changes cause emotional stress for your son
- Your son starts avoiding certain social activities
- Breast changes last over 3 years
- You have other questions or concerns

### Pediatric Care Advice

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