



achieving a manly chest

More men are seeking correction for gynaecomastia, according to Sydney plastic surgeon **Dr Ben Norris**. Gillian Samuel reports.

Sydney plastic surgeon Dr Ben Norris says he has noticed more men presenting with enquiries regarding gynaecomastia over the past three years.

'I believe there are a number of reasons for this,' he says. 'I think it's becoming more acceptable for men to acknowledge they have a problem.' While so called man boobs are a topic for jokes, he says men now feel that they are allowed to do something about them without feeling they are indulging in cosmetic surgery for reasons of vanity. 'Now men generally do take more interest in their appearance and they're prepared to admit to this problem and seek correction.'

There are two main groups of men he sees. 'The most common are young men who are in very good shape, who are dedicated to going to the gym and have used anabolic steroids.' The use of steroids alters the hormonal balance and breasts develop as a result of a steroid-induced glandular condition.

According to Dr Norris, these men seem to know each other and have passed on a chain of referrals for treatment.



'This tells me discussion is going on among men about the problem,' he says.

The second group of men seeking help reflects the fact that Australia is becoming a fat nation, he says. 'They tend to be rather overweight and generally unfit-looking males with a history of plumpness and being out of shape, the sort of guys who are too shy to take their shirts off. What they have is more of a fat deposit problem than a glandular problem.'

The average age of both these groups is the early 30s.

A third group is composed of what Dr Norris calls 'studly hubbies' whose partners are behind the visit for a consultation. 'Often these people are initially reluctant to seek treatment and don't see the problem themselves. They are the least likely to proceed with correction.'

He says there are different treatment choices, depending on the nature of the problem. 'Many patients will get away with liposculpture alone if the problem is fatty deposits, however, those patients with a glandular component will need the glandular tissue excised.'

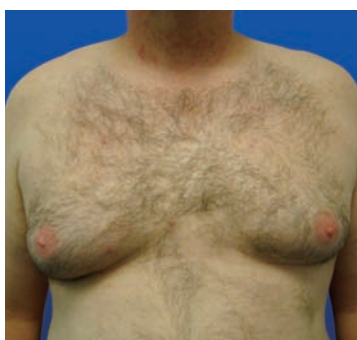
This is usually achieved by making a small semi-circular incision in the areola of the nipple. Dr Norris says that a well placed incision will become almost invisible after healing, especially if the man has a hairy chest.

For some men, these options alone will not solve the problem if they have sagging skin. Weight loss or age can be a factor in this condition, which requires a true skin reduction procedure as well as tissue excision. This will leave a different form of scarring that will not be quite as unobtrusive, he says.

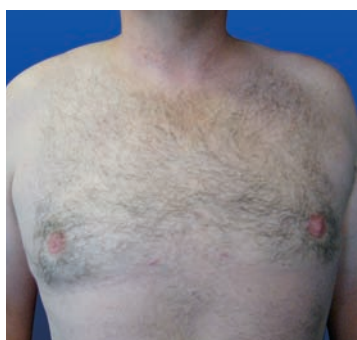
According to Dr Norris, men take a different approach to surgery than women, and are more interested in the 'how' than the 'why'. 'They're interested in the technology and the mechanics of the procedure.'

He says a common reaction after surgery is for men, just like women who have undergone breast reduction, to say they wish they had treatment much earlier, while some men are still unaware the problem can be corrected.

Gynaecomastia surgery is frequently covered in part by Medicare and also by health insurance. **acsm**



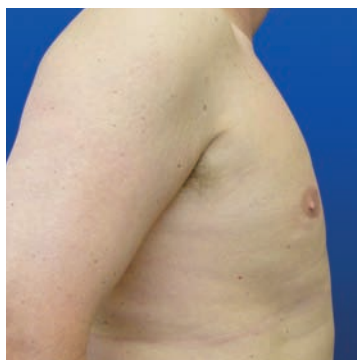
BEFORE



AFTER male breast reduction by Dr Norris



BEFORE



AFTER male breast reduction by Dr Norris