Description

Gynecomastia is swelling of the breast tissue in boys or men. It's caused by an imbalance of the hormones estrogen and testosterone. Newborns, boys going through puberty, and older men often develop gynecomastia from normal changes in hormone levels. Less often, gynecomastia is caused by a health condition such as liver disease, low testosterone production or a thyroid problem. Certain medications and illicit drugs that raise estrogen levels also can cause gynecomastia.

Gynecomastia isn't a serious problem unless it's a sign of an underlying health condition but it can be tough to cope with. Men and boys with gynecomastia sometimes have pain or tenderness in their breasts and may feel embarrassed or unhappy with their bodies.

In most cases, gynecomastia will go away on its own. If it is caused by medications or illicit drugs, it usually goes away after they are stopped. Gynecomastia is often treated with medications that help balance hormone levels. In some cases, surgery to remove breast tissue is an option.

Gynecomastia refers to the benign enlargement of the male breast, either due to the increased adipose tissue, glandular tissue, fibrous tissue, or a combination of all three. Gynecomastia may be associated with any of the following:

- An underlying hormonal disorder
- A side effect of certain drugs
- Associated with obesity
- Related to specific age groups (i.e., neonatal gynecomastia, adolescent gynecomastia; or gynecomastia of aging).

Decision Criteria

Administrative

1. Referral from member’s PCP along with supporting medical documentation. Appropriate documentation must include:
   a. Member’s name and THC ID#
   b. Proposed date of procedure, name of facility, and appropriate ICD and CPT codes
   c. Name and contact information of requesting provider & surgeon
   d. Progress notes documenting patient history & physical; treatment rendered to date and results.
   e. Photographs documenting severity of breast(s) enlargement strongly suggested.
2. Service must be rendered by THC contracted or approved provider at a contracted or approved facility.
3. Member must have current eligibility on Date of Service.
4. Procedure must be prior approved by THC and determined to be medically necessary and not cosmetic in nature.
5. Member must not have documented history of substance abuse or other contra-indications to surgery such as condition being caused by hormonal disorder; side effects of certain drugs; obesity or age related.

**Clinical (All must be met)**

1. Male should be 18 years of age or over 17 with significant breast tissue present for over two years and;

2. Excess breast tissue is glandular and not fatty tissue (confirmed by clinical exam, mammogram and/or tissue pathology)

3. The gynecomastia is classified as Grade II, III, or IV per the American Society of Plastic Surgeons classification.\(^{(4)}\)\(^{(5)}\)
   a) Grade II: Moderate breast enlargement exceeding areola boundaries with edges that are indistinct from the chest
   b) Grade III: Moderate breast enlargement exceeding areola boundaries with edges that are distinct from the chest with skin redundancy
   c) Grade IV: Marked breast enlargement with skin redundancy and feminization of the breast

4. Other causes of gynecomastia have been ruled out including reversible drug treatments (when drugs can be discontinued)

5. Excessive breast development is not due to non-covered therapies or illicit drug (e.g., anabolic steroids or marijuana use); **AND**

6. If gynecomastia is caused by obesity (BMI >30), it must be documented that the patient has failed to respond to conservative measures including participation in a clinically supervised, comprehensive weight loss and exercise program for at least 6 months.

7. The patient’s symptoms are significant (including persistent breast pain, despite the use of analgesics) and have not been resolved by more conservative treatment for at least 6 months.

8. Hormonal causes, including hyperthyroidism, estrogen excess, prolactinomas and hypogonadism have been excluded by appropriate laboratory testing (e.g. with levels of thyroid stimulating hormone (TSH), estradiol, prolactin, testosterone and/or luteinizing hormone (LH) and, if present, have been treated for at least one year before surgery has been considered.\(^{(4)}\)
1 Mayo Clinic.com; Tools for healthier lives…http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/gynecomastia/DS00850; accessed 07/18/2013

2 Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Carolina Corporate Medical Policy-Breast Surgeries; Origination 01/2000; Last Review 09/2012; http://www.bcbsnc.com; accessed 07/18/2013

3 See #2


5 American Society of Plastic Surgeons Practice parameters Gynecomastia; www.plasticsurgery.org/Documents/medical.../GynecomaStia-PP.pdf; accessed 07/18/2013