Policy

The woman has received a full package of supportive care from their GP such as advice on weight loss and managing pain.

- In cases of thoracic/shoulder girdle discomfort, a physiotherapy assessment has been provided.
- Breast size results in functional symptoms that require other treatments/interventions (e.g. intractable candidal intertrigo; thoracic backache/kyphosis where a professionally fitted bra has not helped with backache, soft tissue indentations at site of bra straps).
- Breast reduction planned to be 500gms or more per breast or at least 4 cup sizes.
- Body mass index (BMI) is <27 and stable for at least twelve months.
- Woman must be provided with written information to allow her to balance the risks and benefits of breast surgery.
- Women should be informed that smoking increases complications following breast reduction surgery and should be advised to stop smoking.
- Women should be informed that breast surgery for hypermastia can cause permanent loss of lactation.

Gynaecomastia: Surgery for gynaecomastia is not routinely funded by the NHS.

Note: Patients who smoke should have attempted to stop smoking 8 to 12 weeks before referral to reduce the risk of surgery and the risk of post-surgery complications. Patients should be routinely offered referral to smoking cessation services to reduce these surgical risks.


Rationale for recommendation

Breast reduction surgery is a procedure used to treat women with breast hyperplasia (enlargement), where breasts are large enough to cause problems like shoulder girdle dysfunction, intertrigo and adverse effects to quality of life.

One systematic review and three non-randomized studies regarding breast reduction surgery for hypermastia were identified and showed that surgery is beneficial in patients with specific symptoms. Physical and psychological improvements, such as reduced pain,
Rationale for recommendation (Continued)

increased quality of life and less anxiety and depression were found for women with hypermastia following breast reduction surgery.

Breast reduction surgery for hypermastia can cause permanent loss of lactation function of breasts, as well as decreased areolar sensation, bleeding, bruising, and scarring and often alternative approaches (e.g. weight loss or a professionally fitted bra) work just as well as surgery to reduce symptoms. For women who are severely affected by complications of hypermastia and for whom alternative approaches have not helped, surgery can be offered. The aim of surgery is not cosmetic, it is to reduce symptoms (e.g. back ache).

References


Latest version of the policy is available at: http://www.hounslowccg.nhs.uk/what-we-do/individual-funding-requests.aspx
Version 6 (January 2020)