

# How do I have a Vaginoplasty?

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The Comprehensive Gender Services Program (CGSP) uses the World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH) Standards of Care guidelines when referring you for care relating to gender dysphoria. The process described in this handout helps us to make sure that we follow the WPATH Standards of Care guidelines and provide safe and effective care.

Vaginoplasty is a surgery that creates a vagina and also involves the removal of the penis and testicles. In order to have this surgery:

- You will need **2 referral letters** from licensed mental health providers that address the WPATH Standards of Care guidelines.
- You will need to be using hormone replacement therapy (HRT) for **at least 12 consecutive months** before we are able to review your referral letters. Your referral letters must state that you have been using HRT for at least 12 consecutive months.

## What are my next steps to have a vaginoplasty?

1. Meet with your licensed mental health providers to obtain referral letters and sign a Release of Information Form for them.
  - **Referral Letters:**
    - Your letter writers must be licensed mental health providers willing and able to write referral letters for you to undergo vaginoplasty.
    - You will need to meet with both of your providers face-to-face (in-person).
    - You will need to have separate appointments with each provider.

- If your provider has a limited license, their fully licensed supervisor will need to cosign the letter.
- **Release of Information Forms:**
  - You should receive a copy of the Release form with along with this handout. If you need a copy of the form, please contact our office.
  - You will fill out this form for both of your providers and send your completed form back to us.
  - When you sign this form, you give us your permission to review your referral letters and contact your providers if necessary.
  - We **cannot** review your referral letters until we have this form.
- 2. Make sure your providers send the referral letters directly to our office (see instructions below).
  - We **must** receive both referral letters within 6 months of each other.
- 3. Read through the “*What to Expect: Vaginoplasty*” packet that you received with this handout. This provides more information on the process from consultation appointment to surgery and recovery.
- 4. Fill out and sign a Vaginoplasty Acknowledgment Form, then send the form back to us.
  - This form provides more information on the timeline of your recovery period. We need to make sure that you’ve seen and understood the information.
  - We **cannot** refer you to a surgeon until we have this form.
- 5. Consider beginning the process of permanent hair removal at the surgical site.
  - This permanent hair removal is **required** and may take up to a year to complete.

- CGSP will provide you with a list of permanent hair removal providers and a diagram of where hair removal must be completed.
6. Contact our office by phone or email if you have any questions or concerns about the letter-writing or letter-reviewing process.

## **How do I send my Release of Information and Acknowledgment Forms to the CGSP office?**

You should send your forms to us in one of the following ways:

**Mail:** Michigan Medicine - CGSP  
2025 Traverwood Dr. Suite A1  
Ann Arbor, MI, 48105

**Fax:** (734) 998-2152

**Email:** [genderservices@med.umich.edu](mailto:genderservices@med.umich.edu)

- If you use email to send the Release of Information form, you **must** send us a scanned image of the form. We **cannot** accept a photograph of the form.
- Please **do not** send the Release form directly to the Health Information Management office (the contact information listed on the form itself) as this will cause delays the review process. **Only** send the Release form directly to CGSP using the contact information above.
- Your providers will send their referral letters to our office in the same way.

## **What do you do with my referral letters once you receive them?**

Once we receive your referral letters, we will review them within 10 business days. This review makes sure that the referral letters address the WPATH Standards of Care guidelines.

There are 2 ways that we can respond once we have reviewed your referral letters:

1. We will contact your letter writers if the referral letters **do not** address the WPATH Standards of Care guidelines or if we have questions about the referral letters. Your letter writers **must** discuss the referral letters with our office so that they can update the referral letters as needed.
2. We will refer you to a surgeon when we have 2 complete referral letters for you that addresses the WPATH Standards of Care guidelines.

### **What happens when you refer me to the surgeon?**

When Plastic Surgery receives the referral from our office, they will schedule you for a consultation appointment with a surgeon. The Plastic Surgery office will contact you within 3 weeks of receiving the referral to schedule this appointment.

### **Before scheduling your consultation appointment:**

You **must** be smoke-free and nicotine-free for **2 months** before you can schedule your consultation appointment.

- You **must** stop using **all** nicotine containing products (for example: cigarettes, e-cigarettes/vape pens, nicotine patches, nicotine gum, and chewing tobacco).
- You **must** stop smoking and vaping marijuana.
- You **may** continue to use marijuana products that are **not** smoked or breathed in.

### **At the consultation appointment, you will:**

- Talk to your surgeon to determine if you are a good candidate for surgery.
- Ask your surgeon questions about the proposed surgery.

- Talk with your surgery scheduler about your next steps, including potential insurance coverage and out-of-pocket costs.

**Please note:** You will **not** schedule your surgery date at the consultation appointment.

### **When can I join the waitlist for surgery?**

- You must complete required permanent hair removal at the surgical site to prepare for surgery **before** you join the waitlist.
- The surgeon's team will also need to obtain insurance pre-authorization for payment from your health insurance provider **before** you join the waitlist.
- You will join the waitlist for surgery once the surgeon's team has confirmed that you have completed permanent hair removal and they have obtained insurance pre-authorization for you.
- You will receive your surgery date approximately 2-3 months before that surgery date.

Plastic Surgery will review all of these steps in depth with you at your consultation appointment.

### **Who do I contact if I have questions about this process or my referral letters?**

You can contact our office by phone or email.

**Phone:** (734) 998-2150

**Email:** [genderservices@med.umich.edu](mailto:genderservices@med.umich.edu)

Our office hours are Monday through Friday, 8:00 am – 4:30 pm.

We can also help your providers with their referral letters if they have any questions about the letter writing process and how they can make sure that their referral letters address the WPATH Standards of Care guidelines.

## How can I keep track of this process?

Use our Vaginoplasty Checklist:

- I have met with both of my providers face-to-face (in-person).
- I have talked to my providers about how to write and send my referral letters to CGSP.
- I have completed a Release of Information form and returned it to CGSP.
- I have completed a Vaginoplasty Acknowledgment form and returned it to CGSP.
- I have received a call or email from CGSP letting me know that they have received my referral letters.
- I have received a call from CGSP letting me know that they made the referral to Plastic Surgery.
- I have received a call from Plastic Surgery to schedule my consultation appointment.
- I have completed the required permanent hair removal at the surgical site and I have contacted Plastic Surgery to discuss my next steps.

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