

Trans Health Klinik Welcome Package

Feminizing (2018)



Welcome to the Transgender Health Program at Klinik Community Health.

This welcome package includes initial information that you may find helpful as you begin your health care process with us.

This package focuses on those who wish to *Feminize* their bodies and/or outward expressions to better reflect their inner gender. We acknowledge that “feminizing” is a diverse concept and will mean different things for different folks. We acknowledge that all identities are valid and we seek to provide services that are honouring and affirming.

We have chosen the words and information in this document to be as broad as possible. If you feel left out or uncomfortable with any of the language used, we apologize and encourage you to replace words and terms however you see fit. Feel free to adapt this package to your own needs and goals. Cross-out what is not relevant, add or replace what is missing, re-define terms, take what you need and leave what you do not!

Please note: Our processes are informed by WPATH standards of care guidelines. To learn more, please visit: <http://www.wpath.org/>

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Note: Your team has many other Trans related resources available upon request on topics such as:

- Two-Spirit Identity
- Coming out and transitioning at work
- Safe relationships, dating and safer sex
- Family
- Trans Health peer mentor volunteer program
- Group programming

Please ask us what we have available!

SAFETY AND RESPECT

We strive to create a healthcare environment that is affirming and Trans friendly.

All people having contact with Klinic (patients/clients, staff and volunteers) are entitled to a respectful environment free of disrespectful behaviour, including discrimination (including transphobia), bullying, harassment, sexual harassment, personal harassment and workplace violence. No one may be treated disrespectfully and no one has the right to treat anyone else disrespectfully.

If you have a complaint about the service you have received and you do not wish to raise your complaint with the staff person you have been working with or you feel this person has not dealt with your complaint to your satisfaction, you can speak to or write the Director of Administration about your complaint.

To contact the Director of Administration, call (204) 784-4090 or email klinic@klinic.mb.ca.

To learn more about this process, please visit: <http://klinic.mb.ca/about-klinic/governance/policies/>.

TERMS YOU WILL SEE IN THIS GUIDE

Gender and Gender Identity: A person's internal sense of who they are, and how they identify, in regards to being male, female, both, neither or otherwise. Gender can be complex and influenced by cultural and societal factors. All people have a gender identity and there are many unique terms people use to describe their gender.

Gender Dysphoria: A formal diagnosis in the American Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual, Fifth Edition (DSM-5). A term used by psychologists and medical practitioners to indicate that a person meets the diagnostic criteria to engage in medical transition.

Gender Dysphoria refers to the distress, discomfort, dissatisfaction and anxiety that occurs when someone's body/biology/sex assigned at birth does not reflect their true gender identity.

Transgender or Trans: An adjective used to describe a person whose gender identity does not match the biological sex they were assigned at birth. Transgender is often used as an umbrella term referring to the full spectrum of diverse identities within transgender communities. Sometimes the term "Trans" is used as an abbreviation of Transgender.

Transition: A transgender person's process of creating a life that matches their gender identity. A process that is diverse and unique to each individual. Transition may involve *social changes (such as changing one's name and/or pronoun, changing one's style/clothing or other forms of gender expression)* as well as *medical changes (such as hormone treatments and/or surgical interventions)*.

OUR TEAM APPROACH TO HEALTH

Each person on your health team has a unique role and healthcare focus. Together as a team, we work with you towards achieving your transition goals. The Trans Health Clinic provides consultation, medical and psychosocial supports for Transgender clients. Client care is individualized and services are tailored to client needs.

WE ARE A SPECIALTY CLINIC

The Trans Health Clinic is a specialty clinic and is not able to act as your primary care provider. For example, if you have a sore throat, we would ask you to see your family doctor. Once our clients are no longer receiving transition related medical treatments, care will be transferred to a primary health care provider (such as a family doctor or nurse practitioner). We require our clients to have a primary health care provider before seeing a psychologist for surgery assessments. They can find one through contacting:

Family Doctor Finder

Phone: 204-786-7111 or toll free: 1-866-690-8260 or visit

www.gov.mb.ca/health/familydoctorfinder

This service has a list of transgender friendly practitioners.

Your Trans Health Clinic Team: Trans Health Clinic main phone line: 204-784-4051

Medical Assistants (MAs): (204) 784-4051

Role: Medical Assistants provide clients with primary program information and maintain program waitlist. Their role also includes booking client appointments and sending referrals to other medical providers. Medical Assistants provide administrative support to providers on the Trans Health team.

Social Workers: (204) 784-4061

Role: Social workers collect social and mental health history, they can help connect you to basic human need services, connect you with community resources and may provide counselling support. You can talk to our social workers about navigating the social “out there in the world” aspects of your transition such as getting your legal I.D. changed, family dynamics, coming out, relationships, coping with emotions and connecting with communities. Our social workers have a role in your intake process and strive to give you the information you need to lead the charge of your own unique transition journey. Ask us questions, and we will do our best to answer.

Nurses: (204) 784-4083

Role: Nurses collect health history, can discuss health related questions, review labs with you and provide information and teaching regarding medication administration. If you are interested in surgical options, we can help answer questions and do the preoperative appointment if you do not have a family doctor.

Medical practitioners

Role: You will see any of the above practitioners for hormone prescriptions and/or to start referrals to psychology for surgeries or other transitioning procedures. The practitioners will manage your hormone levels and provide your transitioning health care while you are in the Transgender Health Clinic.

Psychologist

Role: Manitoba Health requires a diagnosis of Gender Dysphoria for surgeries to be funded. Currently, Manitoba Health requires two letters of recommendation to confirm this diagnosis and approve funding - one letter from a health care provider and one from a psychologist. You meet the psychologist at Klinik when the Trans health physician or nurse practitioner has the opinion that you are ready for gender affirming surgery (based on WPATH guidelines). The psychologist conducts a comprehensive mental health and readiness assessment prior to contributing a letter. They will ask you about your family history, social situation, gender development, and mental health history. They will also establish informed consent by ensuring that you fully understand the implications of surgery and that you will be able to care for yourself safely during the recovery process.

A note on mental health: Mental health issues are common in the general population and even more common among gender diverse people due to a number of factors, including minority stress and transphobia. If you have unmet mental health needs, the psychologist will work with you to determine a plan for addressing them. Mental health issues do not preclude participation in gender affirming surgeries.

PROGRAM INTAKE AND APPOINTMENT FLOW

Depending on your transition goals, you will likely meet with a social worker, a nurse and a medical practitioner during your initial intake visits. Do not worry-your appointments will not always take this long.

- Intake appointments are a chance for you to get to know our program and a chance for us to get to know you and your unique goals.
- Our intake process is not a means to question your identity. We do not require you to “prove” to us who you are, but to treat you and support you we have to know who you are! Learning your detailed health history will help us to coordinate your treatments more seamlessly and holistically.
- You lead the pace and overall direction of your transition. There is no “one way” to do this; we strive to work *with* you and meet your needs.
- Initial intake visits will usually require two appointments, but may take three depending on scheduling. Once we have become acquainted, have a good sense of your health history and your transition needs, we will work with you to begin treatments.

In most cases, you can expect the following appointment flow (appointments and time frames may vary and will depend on your unique goals)

Initial intake

- Health information gathering with both social work and nursing staff
- Attend lab for baseline blood work

Intake meet and greet with medical practitioner

- Review blood work
- Review medical transition goals
- Review hormone therapy consent forms (if relevant to your transition goals)

2nd medical practitioner visit

- Receive hormone therapy prescriptions (this may vary depending on practitioner's assessment and patient's unique goals)

Social work appointments

-You may request regularly scheduled counselling sessions or call for appointments as needed for support and/or resources. We are here if you need us.

Other referrals

(Wait times may vary-talk to your Trans Health Team)

- Hair removal
- Feminizing voice therapy
- Fertility preservation/family planning
- Legal name and gender marker change
(forms available: <https://vitalstats.gov.mb.ca/>)

Psychological Assessment

(Wait times may vary)

- Assessment to support Gender Dysphoria diagnosis
- Assesses psychological readiness for gender affirming surgeries based on WPATH criteria
- MB Health requires this opinion from a Psychologist in order to fund certain gender affirming surgeries

Gender affirming surgeries

(Wait times may vary)

- Talk to your health team about feminizing surgery options
- Some surgeries are offered in Manitoba, some offered in Montreal
- Some surgeries are covered by Manitoba Health and some are not.
Please refer to this info package and talk to your team.

Preoperative and Postoperative care

- Can be done by your family physician or your Trans Health medical practitioner

Transfer care to family physician

- Once you have reached your transition goals, your care will be transferred to your family physician, nurse practitioner or primary care provider who can continue to prescribe hormone therapy

- If you do not have a family physician or nurse practitioner, we encourage you to use the family doctor finder (<http://www.gov.mb.ca/health/familydoctorfinder/> or call 1-866-690-8260). This service has a list of transgender friendly practitioners.

GENDER AFFIRMING TREATMENTS

Hormones

- Estrogen and a hormone blocker are prescribed to encourage certain feminizing effects.
- Hormones and blockers are either fully or partially covered by EIA or other health insurance benefits such as Blue Cross, Great West Life or Greenshield. If you do not have coverage, you will be charged full price for these medications at the pharmacy. You can also apply for the Manitoba pharmacare program (see pharmacare info page for details).

Fertility Treatments

- Before hormone therapy you may choose to think about sperm banking. Reproductive Health option information can be given to you at your first appointment with your practitioner if you would like. Fertility treatments are not currently covered by health insurance.

Bottom Surgery

- Gender Reassignment Surgery (GRS) usually consists of:
 - Orchiectomy: removal of the testicles
 - Penectomy: removal of the penis
 - Vaginoplasty: creation of a vagina and vulva
- GRS is currently performed at the Centre de Chirurgie in Montreal, Quebec. However, Orchiectomy on its own can be performed by urologists in Winnipeg.
- GRS is fully covered by Manitoba Health if a psychological assessment (from an approved provider) has taken place and supports readiness for surgery. You must have a primary health care provider before a psychological assessment can take place.
- For funding to be approved for bottom surgery, you must be on hormone therapy and living full time in your identified gender for at least one year.
- Clients pay up front for their transportation costs to Montreal and keep their receipts and plane tickets for reimbursement by Manitoba Health.

See <https://www.grsmontreal.com/en/home.html> for more details.

Facial Feminization Surgery (FFS)

- FFS is not currently covered by Manitoba Health. Surgical options are available for a private fee in Montreal or out of the country.

Adam's Apple Shaving

- This surgery is not covered by Manitoba Health. It can be performed in Montreal or out of Canada if paid for privately.

Breast Augmentation

- This surgery is not covered by Manitoba Health. Options are available through private clinics.

Hair Removal

- There are two options for hair removal: Laser or Electrolysis (see Laser vs Electrolysis fact sheet for more detail)
- Laser hair removal is covered by Manitoba Health if the referral is made by an approved provider on our Trans Health Klinik team. Hair removal by electrolysis is also covered in some cases ask your health team for further details.
- Private option cost estimates are ~\$2400 for full treatment electrolysis package, and ~\$1600 or more for laser treatment package.

Laser vs Electrolysis

<i>Laser Hair Removal</i>	<i>Electrolysis</i>
Cost is calculated per treatment. Average cost for facial/neck hair removal is \$150 per treatment (2015)	Cost is calculated per hour. Average cost per hour for facial/neck hair removal is \$60 per hour (2015)
The Mainstream laser unit can only be used with those with light skin and dark hair. It can burn those with dark skin, and won't give good results with those with lighter hair. Laser targets pigment.	Can be used on anyone no matter the hair or skin colour as it attacks the hair follicle itself, not the pigment in the hair. Each hair follicle has to be individually treated. Number of hours of treatment depends on the type of electrolysis used. Types of electrolysis: Galvanic: original electrolysis treatment, applied by direct current, resulting in a chemical change to the hair follicle Thermolysis: aka radio/high frequency, uses alternating current to heat and kill the hair follicle Blend: a combination of direct and alternating current, using chemical and heating action together or one after the other to kill the hair follicle

<p>Treatments are spaced out about a month apart to achieve best hair removal results. Mayo clinic states that laser treatments can reduce hair amounts by 40-80%</p>	<p>Can be scheduled as needed every 1-6 weeks apart depending on rate of hair growth and personal preference. With regular visits, hair amounts can be reduced by 75% in 6-18 months</p>
<p>Can treat tens of thousands of hairs at a time</p>	<p>Treats one hair at a time, about 200-800 hairs/hr</p>
<p>Feels like a rubber band snapping against the skin and causes a sensation of heat. Coarse hair feels more of the burning sensation</p>	<p>Feels like a stinging/pricking sensation for each follicle that is treated</p>

***Adapted from table by Jessica Jacob, RN (NP student); 2015**

Tucking and padding

- Depending on your goals, you may choose to make your underwear area look smoother. You may also choose to use undergarments, breast forms, and foam to create the appearance of larger breasts, hips, and buttocks. There are a number of methods and devices that may help you with these goals. These items are not covered by health insurance.
- For more information, we recommend the following website:
<http://transhealth.phsa.ca/social-transition-options/binding-padding-tucking/binding>

Feminizing voice therapy

- At your request, a referral can be made to speech language services through Deer Lodge Centre. If you go through Deer Lodge, the service is covered through Manitoba Health. There are also options for private voice therapy if you prefer. Talk to your Trans health team for more info.

Legal name and gender marker change

- You may wish to change your name and gender marker on your government issued identification. There are costs associated with this process, please talk to your health team if you are on EIA or have concerns about affording the fees. You may access some required forms online at: <https://vitalstats.gov.mb.ca/>

Counselling support

- You may find it helpful to seek counselling support as you transition. Whether you chose to confide in someone you trust, reach out to a peer support group (see community resource section); seek formal counselling from Trans Health social workers or other counselling resources-that is up to you! It is normal to need some support during this process and we encourage you to reach out as needed.

We hope this welcome package has given you some helpful information.

We encourage you to look through some additional resources included in this package. We have more resources available upon request and we look forward to many more questions from you as you continue your journey.

Sincerely,

Your Trans Health Klinik team