

# Trans Health Klinik Welcome Package

*Masculinizing (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 *Masculinize* their bodies and/or outward expressions to better reflect their inner gender. We acknowledge that “masculinizing” 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 Klinik (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 [klinik@klinik.mb.ca](mailto:klinik@klinik.mb.ca).

To learn more about this process, please visit: <http://klinik.mb.ca/about-klinik/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 is congruent with (or matching) 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

[www.gov.mb.ca/health/familydoctorfinder](http://www.gov.mb.ca/health/familydoctorfinder)

This service has a list of transgender friendly practitioners.

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

**Medical Assistants (MA's):** 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 give 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 for administration of testosterone. If you are interested in surgical options, we can answer questions and help organize the referral. We can also do the preoperative appointment if you do not have a family doctor.

**Medical practitioners:**

Role: You will see the 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 such as minority stress and transphobia. If you have unmet mental health needs, the psychologist will work with you to determine a plan for addressing your mental health needs. Mental health issues do not preclude participation in gender affirming surgeries.

**PROGRAM INTAKE AND APPOINTMENT FLOW**

Depending on your transition goals, you will probably 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)

### Testosterone self-injection teaching appointments with nursing staff

- Up to three individual teaching sessions
- Patients are encouraged to attend monthly drop-in Testosterone education group sessions as needed. Sessions occur first Friday of the month: Sept - June in the basement of Klinik on Portage.

### 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, but generally you may pursue these goals when you feel ready. Talk to your Trans health team)

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

### Psychological Assessment

(Wait times will vary)

- Assessment to support "Gender Dysphoria" diagnosis
- Assesses psychological readiness for gender affirming surgeries
- 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 for details on "top" and "bottom" masculinizing surgical options- Some surgeries offered in Manitoba, some offered in Montreal
- Please refer to this info package and talk to your team about health coverage



### Preoperative and Postoperative care

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

### Transfer of 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**

- Testosterone is prescribed to encourage certain masculinizing effects. It is most often prescribed as an injectable and you will be taught how to self inject. Other types of testosterone, (such as pills or topical creams/gels) are less effective and more expensive, but they can be options if you would like to discuss them with your practitioner.
- Testosterone is 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 may also apply for the Manitoba pharmacare program (see pharmacare info page for details).

### **Fertility Treatments**

- Before hormone therapy, you may choose to think about your fertility options, such as ova harvesting and preservation, or other family planning options. Reproductive 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.

### **Top Surgery:**

- Top surgery includes removal of the breast tissue (mastectomy) and chest masculinization, which includes nipple grafting.
- Top surgery is fully covered by Manitoba Health if a psychological assessment (from an approved provider) has taken place and supports readiness for surgery.
- Wait times for psychological assessment may vary. You must have a primary health care provider before a psychological assessment can take place.
- Consultations and preoperative appointments will take place with your plastic surgeon prior to your actual surgery date.

## **Bottom Surgery:**

Hysterectomy: Surgical removal of the internal sex organs, including the uterus. Along with possibly alleviating gender dysphoria, the results of this surgery include stopping monthly bleeding and it is a permanent form of contraception.

-Hysterectomy 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 a gender affirming Hysterectomy, you must be on hormone therapy and living full time in your identified gender for at least one year.

-Referrals are made to a gynecologist in Winnipeg. Consultations and preoperative appointments will take place prior to your actual surgery date.

1. Metaoidioplasty: Elongation of the clitoris and release of the clitoris with the desired result of being able to stand and urinate. Testicular implants are included.

-OR-

3. Phalloplasty: The creation of a new penile shaft by removal of the skin from another area of the body, most likely the forearm. Testicular implants are included, with an internal pump in the scrotum allowing the new or neophallus (penis) to become erect for sexual penetration.

- Metaoidioplasty and Phalloplasty are both performed at the Centre de Chirurgie in Montreal, Quebec.
- Metaoidioplasty and Phalloplasty are both 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.
- Psychological assessment for Metaoidioplasty or Phalloplasty may be done at the same time as assessment for Hysterectomy.
- For funding to be approved for Metaoidioplasty or Phalloplasty, 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.

## **Hair Removal for purpose of surgery:**

- Hair removal of the forearm is required for those who are planning to undergo phalloplasty surgery. In order to create a hair free phallus, the forearm must have hair removed.
- This is covered through Manitoba Health if a psychological assessment (from an approved provider) has taken place and supports readiness for phalloplasty.

- During your Phalloplasty consultation appointment in Montreal, the hair removal recommendation is formally made and you will then be referred for covered laser hair removal of the forearm in Winnipeg. Currently, electrolysis is not covered by Manitoba health. See Laser vs Electrolysis table for more details.

### 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 will not 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: <b>Galvanic:</b> original electrolysis treatment, applied by direct current, resulting in a chemical change to the hair follicle <b>Thermolysis:</b> aka radio/high frequency, uses alternating current to heat and kill the hair follicle <b>Blend:</b> a combination of direct and alternating current, using chemical and heating action together or one after the other to kill the hair follicle
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%	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
Can treat tens of thousands of hairs at a time	Treats one hair at a time, about 200-800 hairs/hr

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

### **Chest Binding:**

- Binding is a way to flatten out the chest tissue to appear more in line with your gender expression. There are many different ways to bind but it is important to choose a method that feels reasonably comfortable and does not cause damage to your body. For example, if the chest binder is too tight it may cause difficulty breathing, pain, and can even damage the ribs. They can also be very warm so choosing a breathable material is ideal. Costs of chest binders will vary and health insurance providers do not cover them.

For more information on binding, we recommend the following site:

<http://transhealth.phsa.ca/social-transition-options/binding-packing-tucking/binding>

- Clinic Trans health does have a small binder exchange program. Feel free to ask a team member to see if there is a binder available that may work for you. Please also consider donating your gently used chest binders if you are no longer using them.

### **Packing**

- Using an object in front of the pants or underwear to create a bulge.
- For more information, we recommend the following site:

<http://transhealth.phsa.ca/social-transition-options/binding-packing-tucking/binding>

### **Masculinizing 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), or seek formal counselling from Trans Health social workers or other counselling resources- that's 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