



The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center

# Gender-Affirming Surgery: Vaginoplasty and Vulvoplasty



**THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY**  
WEXNER MEDICAL CENTER



We understand the importance of gender-affirming surgery to your well-being and helping you more closely align with your gender identity. Should you decide that surgery is the right decision, you'll receive support at every step on this journey from our experienced and compassionate team of experts. We take seriously the trust you have placed in our care.

Gender-affirming surgery is not simple and results will vary, as every person's body is different. But you can feel confident that our goal for every surgery is to create female genitalia, including the vagina (internal pouch) and vulva (external features), that is both natural-looking and physically and sexually functional.

## Your Steps to Surgery

1

### Consultation

You'll begin with an appointment with one of our surgeons through telehealth or in person. There's no referral needed to meet with one of our surgeons but your primary care physician can arrange an appointment.



During your first visit, we'll ask about your transition, your goals for transition and your goals for surgery. We'll talk to you about recovery after the surgery.

We'll discuss your general health, as you'll want to be as healthy as possible at the time of surgery to avoid any complications. This means no smoking or using nicotine at least six weeks before and after surgery, maintaining a healthy weight leading up to surgery and controlling diabetes, if present. We can provide help and support in these areas.



Surgical recovery will take six to eight weeks. It's important that as you begin planning for the surgery, you also begin planning for a safe recovery. This includes identifying a support person who'll help you with errands and everyday tasks such as grocery shopping, picking up your prescriptions, walking the dog, etc. It's important you have a clean and stable place to recover, and that you have the financial resources you'll need during this time.

We recommend you **bring a written list of questions** to your consultation appointment.

*If the initial visit is through telehealth, we will arrange an in-person visit. During this appointment, we'll perform a brief and painless genital exam.*

2

### Hair Removal

If you're considering vaginoplasty with a canal, it's important that you remove hair from the areas of skin that will be used to make the vagina. Because hair removal takes several months and multiple sessions, the sooner you begin this process, the better. Laser hair removal and electrolysis are two types of popular hair removal methods. We recommend electrolysis. We don't remove hair at the time of surgery because this can cause a problem during surgery. The cost associated with hair removal is generally not covered by your insurance so you need to make financial arrangements as early as possible. We can provide you with a list of providers who are familiar with vaginoplasty for hair removal.

3

### Affirmation Letters

Before scheduling your surgery, **we'll need two letters of support** for gender-affirming surgery from your providers, as recommended by the World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH) standards of care. One letter should be from a mental health professional who knows you well.



If you're able to **bring copies of these letters to your consultation, we'll be able to schedule your surgery faster.** If you don't have the letters in time for your consultation and need help, we can provide assistance and resources.

Please note that we follow current WPATH guidelines, which ask that surgery be done only after a person has been socially transitioned and taking hormone therapy for at least one year. Exceptions can be made in limited cases.

# Your Team

We're proud to provide you thoughtful and sensitive care. Here are the experts who'll meet with you and perform your surgery:

## Urology



**Nima Baradaran, MD**, is a urologist in the Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center's Department of Urology. After finishing urologic training, Dr. Baradaran completed an additional year of training in reconstructive urology, which focuses on surgery for complicated situations involving the genitals and urinary tract.

Dr. Baradaran performs genital surgery regularly and is often asked to manage the most difficult genital and urinary problems. He has continued to study and learn new techniques, and has visited several transgender surgery centers around the country.

## Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery



**Rajiv Chandawarkar, MBBS**, is a plastic surgeon in Ohio State's Department of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery. He has extensive experience in complex reconstructive surgeries, and is passionate about caring for the transgender community. He performs chest surgery and will join Dr. Baradaran in performing vaginoplasty.

***For your convenience, Dr. Chandawarkar and Dr. Baradaran will meet with you together in one visit.***

**Resident physicians** are doctors who have completed medical school and are in training to become a specialist. You may meet residents who are working with our surgeons at your consultation, in the hospital or at follow-up visits.

Our **Transgender Primary Care Clinic** provides many aspects of care including primary care, hormone therapy, basic mental health and gynecologic services, and referrals when needed. If you would like to see one of our Transgender Primary Care Clinic physicians, please call 614-688-6490.

**Pelvic floor physical therapists** will work with you before and after surgery to teach you about your anatomy and progress with vaginal dilators as needed.

No referral is needed to schedule a consultation. To talk with our team and learn more about gender-affirming surgery at The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center, please call 614-293-8155 to schedule a consultation.