

Patient Handbook

Comprehensive Care
for Transgender
and Non-Binary
Individuals



**Mount
Sinai**

*Center for Transgender
Medicine and Surgery*



Welcome to the Mount Sinai Center for Transgender Medicine and Surgery

At the Mount Sinai Center for Transgender Medicine and Surgery (CTMS), we provide comprehensive, compassionate care to transgender and non-binary individuals. Our team is comprised of experts in primary care, hormone therapy, behavioral health, gender-affirming surgeries and other supportive services. Together, our providers work to ensure that your medical needs are addressed and that you feel supported as a valued member of our clinic.

Our Mission

is to provide integrated, multidisciplinary, patient-centered health care for transgender and non-binary people, and to advance transgender and non-binary health care delivery globally by serving as a model for practice, health care education, and research.

Our Vision

is to apply experience gained in our comprehensive program to inform health care treatment options for transgender and non-binary people, and to leverage our pioneering spirit, scientific research culture, and collaborative team to further establish novel, effective approaches for transgender and non-binary health care.



Medical Care

Patients who come to our clinic will be met by providers who are knowledgeable about and skilled in the area of transgender medicine. We provide comprehensive gender-affirming care that is individualized to the health needs and goals of each patient.

Primary Care

At CTMS, our primary care team will help keep you healthy and take care of you when you are not. A CTMS primary care provider can advise you on the most important health screens and connect you with resources that are gender-affirming when you need the care of a specialist to stay healthy.

Pediatric/Adolescent Care

We provide care for transgender and non-binary youth across all ages. Our youth transgender program includes primary care, endocrine therapy, counseling, and family support.

Hormone Therapy

With expert providers on staff, we strive to give you the best possible outcomes in your hormone care. A CTMS provider will make sure that you understand the risks and benefits of hormone therapy. We will optimize your regimen both to maximize effects from hormones and to keep you safe. At CTMS we follow a patient-centered medical approach where treatment choices are made by you and your providers in a customized fashion that considers your needs and your safety.

Feminizing Hormone Therapy

Feminizing hormone therapy can help to develop breasts, change the shape of the face and body, and change some of the body hair growth patterns. Our providers help achieve these effects using estrogen therapy and testosterone suppressing therapy to best meet patient goals.

Masculinizing Hormone Therapy

Testosterone therapy can help encourage development of facial and body hair, deepen the voice, change the shape of the face and body, and stop menstruation.



Specialty Care

Endocrinology

Our endocrinologists are experts in overseeing hormone therapy. We can also assist with general endocrine needs including:

- Weight management
- Diabetes
- Bone health
- Adrenal disorders
- Thyroid disorders
- Cardiovascular disease
- Fertility
- Interaction of hormone-therapy with other medical treatment

Gynecology

Our team provides both routine and transgender and non-binary specific care. We offer hysterectomy, vaginectomy, and other gynecological procedures when desired.

Urology

Our urology team collaborates on metoidioplasty and vaginoplasty cases, assists with post-operative care for these procedures, and offers orchiectomy, or removal of the testes. The team is also available for any issues that affect genitals or urination in general.

Otolaryngology and Vocal Training

We offer a variety of services to help transgender and non-binary people find voice and speech patterns that are consistent with their gender identity and avoid vocal strain. Speech-Language Pathologists (SLP) specializing in voice care coach patients through these behavioral changes. Laryngologists, physicians specializing in voice care, can help with surgeries to reduce the size of the Adam's Apple as well as those to raise and lower voice pitch.



Plastic Surgery

Our plastic surgery team takes the lead in many of the gender-affirming surgeries offered through CTMS including vaginoplasty, phalloplasty, chest reconstruction, and facial feminization surgeries. Our plastic surgeons work with the entire CTMS team to make sure every patient has the best possible outcome.



Behavioral Health

We offer a wide range of behavioral health services to help with questions related to transgender treatment and other behavioral health concerns:

- Individual counseling
- Support groups
- Psychiatric evaluations
- Ongoing medication management
- Pre-surgical evaluations
- Pre-and post-surgical psychotherapeutic support
- Education for individuals and their families
- Trauma-informed therapy

During an initial evaluation, the CTMS behavioral health team will work with you to outline a treatment plan to help you be as healthy as possible.



Gender Affirming Surgeries

We perform a variety of surgical procedures in our state-of-the-art operating rooms. We will work with you to understand your goals and develop a plan to meet your needs.

CTMS follows the World Professional Association for Transgender Health's (WPATH) Standards of Care guidelines for helping transgender and non-binary people access surgery. We also work to satisfy requirements established by your insurance company to make sure the desired procedures are covered.

In order to make sure recovery goes as well as possible, we ask all of our patients to be as healthy as can be prior to surgery. Any medical conditions such as high blood pressure or diabetes must be well controlled before surgery. It is also very important that there is no nicotine in your system as nicotine can interfere with healing. If you have any known medical conditions, such as heart disease or an organ transplant, please bring records from your medical provider to your first visit stating that you are okay to have surgery.



Ambulatory Procedures

Ambulatory surgeries do not require an overnight stay in the hospital. If your pain is controlled and there are no complications, you can go home the same day. These surgeries are also sometimes called outpatient or same-day procedures.

Orchiectomy

Orchiectomy is the removal of testes. All other tissues and parts of the genitals remain. Many people who seek elimination of testosterone production without undergoing full genital reconstruction pursue this procedure. This procedure can be done under general or local anesthesia. Most people recover in one to two weeks.

Breast Augmentation

In a breast augmentation, the surgeon inserts implants into the chest to create a more feminine-appearing chest. Sometimes fat can be taken from other parts of your body (thigh, buttocks, and belly) to help achieve the best result. At your consultation, the surgeon will discuss the options that will provide the best outcome. This procedure is done under general anesthesia. Most people recover in one to two weeks.

Voice Feminization Surgery

CTMS surgeons use surgery to both raise and lower vocal pitch. To change the voice to a higher pitch, the vocal folds are shortened by creating a web between the front of them (modified Wendler Glottoplasty). To change the voice to a lower pitch, the tension is taken off the vocal folds thus not allowing the patient to access high pitches (Thyroplasty type 3). Ideally, vocal coaching overall prior to surgery shortens the post-op recovery course and improves the overall outcome. Recovery from these procedures involves reducing voice use and at times complete voice rest. By one month after surgery, most patients are back to conversational voice use.

Adam's Apple Reduction

Surgery can be done through a small incision below the chin. This allows the surgeon to visualize the thyroid cartilage to remove as much of the prominence as possible while protecting the vocal folds from injury.

Chest Masculinization

During chest masculinization surgery, the surgeon removes breast/fat tissue and repositions the nipple to create a masculine appearing chest.

At your consultation, you can talk to the surgeon about your goals. The surgeon will then recommend the best surgical approach to meet your needs.

Chest masculinization requires general anesthesia. After surgery, you will have a compression vest and surgical drains. The drains are removed several weeks after surgery. You must wear the compression vest for at least four weeks post-operatively. You will have gradual improvement over several months to a year. Most people can resume regular daily activities after three months.

Hysterectomy

Hysterectomy is the removal of the uterus and ovaries under general anesthesia, completed by our OB/GYN team. Most people recover within two to four weeks after surgery.



Inpatient Procedures

Inpatient procedures require staying in the hospital for at least one night. For these surgeries, you will meet with a medical provider, a mental health provider, and a social worker before seeing a surgeon. Each person you meet with will help you get ready for surgery. All questions about surgery can be answered at the initial medical visit.

The social worker will help plan aftercare like housing and a caregiver. If you are coming from outside of NYC, the CTMS team requires that you stay within 90 minutes of our surgery offices for your recovery period. The social worker will help you make these plans.

Recovering from surgery can be difficult and frustrating. The mental health provider will help you prepare for your recovery as best as possible.

After completing these three appointments, the surgeon's office will call you to schedule a consultation.

You may have to make physical preparations for your surgical procedure. We will discuss this with you at your initial medical visit. For instance, genital surgeries often require hair removal in the area on your body where the surgery will take place. Our CTMS esthetician can provide laser hair removal for patients undergoing genital reconstruction surgery. We will schedule your surgery date with these preparations in mind.

Body Contouring

Body contouring surgery includes skin removal, liposuction (fat removal) and fat grafting to change your body shape to better match your gender identity. Your surgeon will discuss your body image goals and tailor the surgical plan accordingly. This surgery is performed under general anesthesia followed by one night in the hospital. Recovery requires not putting body weight on fat grafted areas for three weeks.

Facial Feminization Surgery

Facial feminization includes a variety of procedures including:

- Forehead and brow bone reshaping
- Nose reshaping (rhinoplasty)
- Jaw and chin contouring
- Hairline advancement
- Tracheal shave

A plastic surgeon will work with you to discuss your goals and options to tailor surgery to meet your needs.

Facial Feminization is performed under general anesthesia and normally requires one night in the hospital after surgery. Most people recover in two weeks, though swelling will take several months to a year to completely resolve.

Vaginoplasty

Vaginoplasty is the creation of a vagina, and the external components of the vulva.

It is important to have certain areas of your genital hair removed prior to getting vaginoplasty, so you do not have hair growth later inside of the vagina. Electrolysis or laser hair removal will help. Our medical providers can recommend the best options for you.

You will stay in the hospital for three days after surgery. Diligent dilation is an important part of your recovery, and will help you maintain your vaginal canal. Your surgical team will guide you. Most of your recovery will be completed by six to eight weeks, and you will be able to return to full activity (including sex) by three months.

Metoidioplasty

During metoidioplasty, plastic and urological surgeons collaborate to create a small phallus from the clitoris. Hysterectomy and vaginectomy can be done at the same time.

Metoidioplasty can be done with or without extending the urethra to allow urination out of the tip of the phallus. Our surgeons can also create a scrotum and insert testicular implants depending on your preference. After metoidioplasty, there is a three to five day hospital stay, and you may go home with a tube in your stomach that will help drain your urine. Recovery can take six to eight weeks, and problems with urinary flow are very common, but often resolve on their own.

Phalloplasty

Phalloplasty is a multiple stage procedure that creates a phallus from skin taken from somewhere on your body and moved to the pelvic area. The number of steps and length of the hospital stay vary depending on how the phallus is created and whether or not the urethra is extended to the tip of the phallus.

The CTMS team will work with you to help you achieve your phalloplasty goals and start customizing your treatment plan from the beginning of your first medical visit.

Support Services

Social Work

At CTMS, we support our patients by offering individual and group social work services. Our social workers conduct comprehensive psychosocial assessments, link patients to community resources, and provide counseling and group support. Social workers also guide patients through the surgical process by securing stable aftercare plans and reliable support systems for gender-affirming procedures.

Trauma Care and Support Services

CTMS collaborates with the Crime Victims Treatment Center, Inc. (CVTC) to offer the Transgender Healing and Resilience Initiative for Survivors of Violence (THRIV). This program offers gender-affirming, trauma-focused therapy specifically for transgender and non-binary survivors of interpersonal violence and trauma, ages 13 and up. Depending on the needs of the individual, services can range from a few sessions of psycho-education and skills training, to past-focused processing of traumatic experiences, including sexual and intimate partner violence, childhood sexual abuse, trafficking, hate crimes, and community violence. All services at THRIV, and at CVTC, are completely free of charge.

Pharmacy Services

Mount Sinai pharmacies can support all your prescription needs. In addition to multiple convenient locations including at some of our practice sites, we can arrange free delivery in New York City, Long Island, and Upstate New York.

Telehealth Visits

Telehealth visits are available for most of our services. It allows you to interact with your provider from home or on the go through live audio and video. The link describing how video visits work is: https://mychart.mountsinai.org/MyChart/en-US/docs/Video_Visit_Patient_Quick_Reference.pdf. You will need to log in to the MyChart App 15-20 minutes before your visit to eCheck-in.

After-Hours Coverage

After-hours coverage is available to all patients. When a patient calls after hours or on the weekend, the call is forwarded to our answering service. Please be ready to provide the answering service with the name of your primary provider. If it is for a surgical issue, please call the number provided by your surgeon and have the name of the surgeon ready. The answering service will then reach out to the provider.

MyChart

MyChart is a secure means of communication that allows you to directly message your Provider through your electronic medical record. MyChart also allows you to review your health summary, schedule and cancel appointments, review selected test results, and request prescription refills. If you need help enrolling in MyChart or need a refresher, just let us know. Below is the link to the MyChart log-in, and information about having a video visit: <https://mychart.mountsinai.org/mychart/Athentication/Login?>

You should never use MyChart to try and reach your Provider in an emergency situation.

Insurance

CTMS accepts most major insurance depending on provider networks and individual services. To find out whether we are covered in your provider network, it is best to contact your insurance carrier. We may also review your insurance after you enroll in our program to provide additional information.

You can take an active role in covering your care by knowing how your insurance covers gender-affirming services. Your insurance carrier can give you more information about your benefits and out of pocket costs. If you are having a surgery or procedure, we will likely need to obtain pre-authorization from your insurance before you receive this service.

Coverage for Surgeries

Insurance coverage is important for accessing surgical care. If you have general questions about whether your insurance will cover surgical procedures, you may consult your insurance plan booklet for full benefit details, or you may contact your insurance's member services line to request your plan's policy for gender-affirming services. Each plan may be different, so ask for your plan's coverage for "Transgender Services" or "Gender Affirming Surgeries."

Billing

All charges not covered by your insurance are your responsibility. You may receive two types of bills, depending on your insurance—a professional fee to cover services performed by your provider, and a hospital fee to cover things like labs, equipment, facilities, and supplies. Both of these fees may sometimes be referred to as a “copay” or “co-insurance/co-deductible.” If you do not have active coverage at the time of your visit, you will receive a bill for the full cost of the visit.



If you have questions about your copays, co-insurance/co-deductible, or any costs that may be charged to you, you may contact your insurance’s member services line for more information. If you have questions about a bill you received, you may contact the billing department customer service line listed on the bill.

Feedback

We welcome your feedback. Do not hesitate to reach out to any of our staff or leadership with concerns and suggestions. We also have patient suggestion forms that are available in our waiting rooms. You may receive Press Ganey Patient Satisfaction Surveys. If so, please take a moment to fill out to share your opinions with us. You can also send any correspondence to: The Mount Sinai Hospital—Patient Service Center, One Gustave Levy Place, Box 1515, New York, NY 10029. Or contact us via email at CTMSInfo@mountsinai.org.

If we have been unable to resolve concerns, you may contact: The New York State Department of Health: (800) 804-5447 and/or The Joint Commission: (800) 994-6610.

If you have any specific concerns, requiring immediate attention beyond the information above, the Mount Sinai Health System has a Patient Grievance Policy that is available to you at any time. Ask any staff member how to access the policy or contact the patient representative at your convenience for assistance. The information is displayed at the Center.



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