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PATIENT EDUCATION HANDOUTS

Adolescent Gynecomastia

Description

Gynecomastia is a condition that often occurs in boys during puberty. During this time a boy's breasts may begin to take on female breast characteristics. He may notice that his breast is tender and that a small area of breast tissue can be felt beneath his nipple. This condition is very common; about half of all 12- to 16-year-old boys have some degree of gynecomastia.

Cause

Gynecomastia is thought to be caused by an imbalance of hormones in boys during the middle part of puberty.

Diagnosis

Gynecomastia is diagnosed in a boy who has entered puberty and has no other medical conditions or symptoms that suggest a reason for the breast to develop.

Some medicines may cause enlargement of the male breast. Tell your doctor about any un-prescribed medications or supplements your son is taking.

Expected Course

In most cases the tenderness lasts for a few months and then goes away. The breast tissue eventually decreases in size. It is unusual for the condition to last longer than 2 years. Rarely, this condition advances to the point where your son is embarrassed about the amount of breast growth.

Home Care

No specific treatment is needed. Loose clothing may be more comfortable than more tightly fitting shirts.

CALL YOUR CHILD'S PHYSICIAN IMMEDIATELY IF:

(1-888-838-1303 after hours)

- Gynecomastia is causing emotional problems.
- Discharge from the breast occurs.
- You have other concerns about your child's progression through puberty.