

WHAT IS A BINDER

An infographic for Transgender Men, Allies, and Those Willing to Learn About the Trans Experience

A CLOTHING ITEM

A binder is an umbrella term referring to a variety of clothing items worn on the chest to minimize the appearance of breast tissue. Binders are commonly worn by men suffering from gynecomastia, women who prefer the looks of a flat chest, and trans men. They are commonly made out of synthetic materials and usually look like a tank top with the bottom cut off.



BINDERS HAVE A POSITIVE EFFECT ON MENTAL HEALTH

Many trans men report extreme feelings of depression surrounding their chests, often leading to thoughts of self harm. In many scenarios having visible breasts will prevent people from seeing a trans man as a man. Binders can alleviate these feelings and make it easier to "pass" as male.

BINDERS CAN BE DANGEROUS

Binders put pressure on the ribs, back, and chest tissues, most commonly causing back pain and breathing issues. The synthetic material is not very breathable, meaning they can get warm and sweaty fast. There has never been a long term study on the effects of binder use. Many transgender people feel that the positive mental affects outweigh the potential negative physical affects.



BINDER SAFETY INSTRUCTIONS



- Binders should not be worn longer than eight hours
- Binders should not be worn while exercising
- Do not wear a binder in hot temperatures
- Only wear a binder that is properly sized for you
- Only buy high quality binders from a reputable company
- If you feel sick or in pain take off your binder immediately
- Only wear one binder at once
- Do not wear a binder if you have a preexisting condition

MORE THAN JUST CLOTHING

For transgender men a binder is more than just a clothing choice. It is a small thing they can do to make their body feel a little more like their own. There are many styles of binder, but the most common is the half-tank. Later in life many trans men choose to get "top surgery" to remove their breasts and give them a masculine chest. This surgery is expensive and like all surgeries comes with risks,



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An Infographic for Parents and Guardians of Transgender Youth

"Binder" is a term referring to a variety of clothing items worn on the chest by those with unwanted breast* tissue to flatten the chest. Commonly they are worn by transgender people who were assigned female at birth.



Many trans people experience extreme feelings of depression surrounding their chests, often leading to thoughts of self harm. In many scenarios having visible breasts will prevent people from seeing a trans person as their gender. Binders can alleviate these feelings and make it easier for them to pass as their gender.



Binders come in many different forms and price points. Some types (usually those using clasps, velcro, or strings) are unsafe. Binders should always be bought from a reputable company. The most common kind is the half tank which is similar to a sports bra**.



Binders put pressure on the ribs, back, and chest tissues, most commonly only causing soreness but possibly breathing issues. There has never been a long term study on the effects of binder use. Safety instructions must be followed such as only wearing a properly sized binder, only wearing one for eight hours, never wearing one during exercise, and never wearing one in extremely warm climates.



For transgender people a binder is more than just a clothing choice. It is a small thing trans people can do to make their body feel a little more like their own. While binders can be harmful *if used incorrectly*, many trans people agree the mental health benefits outweigh the potential physical risks.



* most masculine transgender people are uncomfortable with the words "breasts" or "boobs" and prefer to say "chest" when the situation allows.

**most masculine transgender people do not like "bras" or the word's use since it is an item so closely tied to womanhood, even if one doesn't have a binder, it is common to use unpadded sports bras and call them binders.