



10 Health Issues Transgender People Should Discuss with their Healthcare Provider

These are the most important topics that [Gay and Lesbian Medical Association](#) healthcare providers have identified for people who are transgender, as adapted by One Colorado. These items may not apply to everyone in this community and are not listed in rank order.

- 1. Access to Care & Coming Out:** Finding a healthcare professional who is competent in providing care to transgender people can be difficult. It's important that your provider knows about your identity so they can provide you the best care. If your provider doesn't seem comfortable with your identity, there are likely other providers in your network to replace them. Once you find an inclusive provider, be sure to discuss insurance coverage and payment assistance programs for any care that may not be covered.
- 2. Health History & Future Goals:** Be open with your provider about what previous treatments and/or surgeries you've undergone, and be explicit about your goals for transitioning. This will guide them in providing you the best possible care. There is a wide diversity in how people may express their identity, and your provider should value your goals for transitioning rather than fixating on a single transgender narrative.
- 3. Hormone Therapy:** Your provider should discuss all routes of administration for hormone replacement therapy, and your hormone levels should be periodically monitored to ensure a safe dosage. Transfeminine folks should discuss the effects of estrogen on your blood sugar and blood pressure; [there are also risks of blood clots and swelling from estrogen](#). Transmasculine folks should talk with their provider about [risks of high red blood cell counts, weight gain, acne, and male-pattern baldness from testosterone](#).
- 4. Cardiovascular Health:** [Transgender people undergoing hormone therapy may be at increased risk of heart attack or strokes](#), especially those who may be overweight, diabetic, hypertensive, or cigarette smokers. Be sure to tell your provider if you have any feelings of chest pain or shortness of breath.
- 5. Cancer:** It's important for transgender individuals to have the same preventative care routines as any other patient. These cancer screenings should be based upon your current anatomy. Hormone therapy may increase your risk of developing certain cancers. Other risk factors may include alcohol use, substance use, tobacco use, depression, disordered eating, and obesity. Talk to your provider about ways to reduce your risk and stay up to date on your screening exams.
- 6. Safer Sex & Sexual Transmitted Infections (STIs):** Depending on anatomy and sexual practices, transgender persons may be at increased risk of certain STIs. Many of these infections are easily prevented through safer sex practices. This might include condom use, PrEP, regular testing, and practicing open communication with sexual partners. Talk to your provider about what safer sex practices might work well for you and your partner(s), and how that might change depending on what sexual behaviors you practice.



7. **Alcohol & Tobacco Use:** [Due to minority stress, discrimination, and/or internalized transphobia, some transgender persons may be at increased risk of abusing alcohol, tobacco, and other substances.](#) Excessive drinking is associated with higher rates of cancers, liver disease, and other health problems. Tobacco use is associated with higher rates of cancers, heart disease, emphysema, high blood pressure, and other conditions. Talk to your provider about what cessation or healthier use might look like for you.
8. **Mental Health:** [Chronic minority stress, along with potential loss of social supports after coming out or concealing your identity, leads to higher rates of anxiety and depression among people who are transgender.](#) Gender dysphoria is also a concern for many transgender individuals. Be open with your provider about your mental health goals and how you can work together to achieve them.
9. **Body Modifications:** Some transgender people may rely on the use of injectable silicone in order to achieve their desired bodily curves, particularly at “pumping parties” where non-medical persons administer injections of low quality silicone that can result in scarring or infection. Shared needles are often used in this setting, which increases your risk of HIV or Hepatitis C infection. Other transgender people may use binders to modify the shape and size of chest tissue, [which may come with risks of shortness of breath, scarring, and pain.](#) Talk to your provider about healthy and safe methods of body modification that achieve your desired goals.
10. **Diet & Exercise:** Healthy diet and exercise are important aspects of health for people of all gender identities. Medical professionals recommend eating a well-rounded diet and exercising for at least 20 minutes three times per week. This may be increasingly important if your transition goals include surgery, which requires patients to be in good physical health. The use of anabolic steroids and certain supplements is also dangerous; discuss with your provider how to reach your fitness goals in a healthy way.