

# Gender Affirming Surgery Preparation Guide

Multi-Specialty Transitions Department – NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

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For additional assistance with any information contained  
within this packet, please contact:  
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# Vaginoplasty and Vulvoplasty Resources

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## **KP Surgical Team:**

*San Francisco Plastic Surgeons:* Dr. Ali Salim, Dr. Roderick Simonds, Dr. Winnie Tong  
*San Francisco Urologist:* Dr. Carl Thomas

*San Francisco Nurse Coordinator:* Chris Spowles  
*San Francisco Medical Social Worker:* Richell Jose  
*San Francisco Physician's Assistant:* Sarah Choi

## **KP Gender-Affirming Care and Services**

<https://mydoctor.kaiserpermanente.org/ncal/mdo/presentation/healthpromotionpage/index.jsp?promotion=transgendercare>

See “Vaginoplasty and Feminizing Genital Surgical Options” link

## **Surgical Procedure Information and Results:**

<http://www.rebecca-betts.com/MTF2014.html>

<http://www.mtfsurgery.net/>

<http://www.tsroadmap.com/physical/vaginoplasty/female-anatomy.html>

<http://www.transbucket.com/>

## **Other Links:**

<http://www.thebody.com/content/80828/what-to-expect-after-bottom-surgery-one-transgende.html?getPage=1>

Facebook Group “Transgender Care via Kaiser – Proud to be Transgender P2BT”

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/193814108058613/>

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# Surgery Preparation Checklist

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## Care Planning

### Employment/School

- Notify employer 30-60 days before surgery date
- Apply for FMLA with employer
- Apply for SDI Online
  - Submit online application 0-49 days after surgery
- Obtain documentation from KP Release of Medical Records Department: “medically necessary surgery”
- Caregiver may be eligible for Paid Family Leave

### Cost

- Confirm share of cost with Member Services
- Budget for approximately \$200 in post-op supplies
- Plan for covering cost of living while out of work

### Medical/Physical Preparation

- Hair removal (phalloplasty + vaginoplasty only)
- Bowel prep (vaginoplasty only)
- Review prescriptions/supplements with surgeon
- Focus on overall wellness: (sleep, healthy nutrition, body movement/exercise) before surgery support optimal healing
- Complete required labs/tests and stabilize health conditions for safety during surgery and recovery

### Stress Reduction and Mental Health

- Connect with friends for emotional support
- Connect/re-connect with your therapist
- To reduce stress and anxiety, list three self-care activities you can do before and after surgery

### Research/Information Gathering

- Attend MST Surgery Class
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

### Caregivers

- Ask people to help you with your recovery
- Confirm caregivers’ roles and your expectations

### Meal and Chore Planning

- Meal/hydration planning (groceries, freeze foods)
- Plan who can do laundry, garbage, animal care, light housekeeping, errands, etc.

### Transportation

- Ride home from hospital
- Ride to/from follow-up appointments
- Confirm with surgeon when safe to drive after surgery

### Prepare Recovery Space

- Confirm a safe and private space
- Prepare recovery space, clean clothes/sheets

### Supplies

- Purchase all necessary supplies from surgeon list
- Obtain prescriptions from surgeon at pre-op visit
- Fill prescriptions at your Kaiser Pharmacy
- Pack hospital bag (snacks, electronics, blanket, etc)

### Additional Preparation:

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

# Understanding Your Benefits

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Not all insurance policies are the same with Kaiser. To learn more about your share of cost, please contact Member Services at 1-800-464-4000 and have your member number ready.

## **Inpatient Procedures:**

- Ask Members Services for your share of cost for “Transgender inpatient surgery” or service code “HOSPTG.”

## **Outpatient Procedures:**

- Ask Member Services for your share of cost for “transgender outpatient surgery” or service code “SURGTG.”
- Hair removal is required before certain genital surgeries and may also require a copay. The service code for each individual hair removal appointment is “PROVTG.” (9-12 months of regular visits is required)

## **Additional Kaiser Permanente Financial Department Contacts:**

- Kaiser Medical Financial Assistance: 1-800-498-2748
- Kaiser Patient Financial Services: 1-866-399-7696
- Deductible Products and Services: 1-800-390-3507

# Choosing Your Caregivers

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Choosing and preparing your caregivers is an important part of preparation for surgery. Recovery is both a physical and emotional journey that may—at times—be challenging. Creating a circle of supportive caregivers is vital. Members of this circle need to be people who you trust, can depend on, and create a safe and healthy emotional environment. The people you allow to help you through this process must understand this. Share this handout with your caregiving team so they can more fully understand your needs.

Think about the type of care you will need. Evaluate your own comfort and your caregiver's comfort in helping you with these tasks.

## Questions to Ask Yourself

- How would you feel about your caregiver assisting you to the toilet, to bathe, or to dress?
- Is your caregiver comfortable providing wound care?
- What will your caregiver do to support themselves if they are overwhelmed?

## Think About Your Needs

- What makes me feel calm and relaxed?
- Who do I feel comfortable and safe to be around?
- Who provides me with the emotional support I need?
- Who makes me laugh?
- Who is most dependable?

## **Questions for Caregivers to think about:**

- *What are my strengths as a caregiver?*
- *Do I understand what is being asked of me?*
- *What are my needs and limits?*
- *Have I communicated my limits and boundaries?*
- *What conversations do I still need to have with my loved one before their surgery?*
- *What will I need to do to take care of myself while I am providing care for someone else?*

When choosing your caregivers, you want to select people who are caring, dependable, and safe to be around.

# Preparing Your Caregivers

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Once you have identified your caregivers, give them as much information about what to expect. Also, give them enough notice so they can plan for their own needs. Better prepare your primary caregivers for your recovery needs by including them in pre-operative consultations and appointments.

## Communicate Your Needs

Your caregivers (relatives, chosen family, friends and neighbors) might not be sure how to best support you.

- Be proactive; make your care plan before surgery
- Identify which activities/roles you need help with
- Assign specific tasks to individual caregivers

Brainstorm all aspects of your life, including day-to-day responsibilities around the house and activities of self-care that you enjoy.

## Examples of Caregiver Activities

- Meal preparation
- Social visits
- Light house work (dog walking, laundry, tidying up, etc.)
- Pharmacy runs
- Grocery shopping
- Transportation to post-op appointments
- Emotional support



Websites can help your circle of support coordinate their responsibilities:

[www.caringbridge.org](http://www.caringbridge.org)  
[www.lotsahelpinghands.com](http://www.lotsahelpinghands.com)

Remember, this may be a stressful time for your caregivers. They will also need breaks and time to re-charge.

# How Can I Help?

## FAQ Sheet for Caregivers

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When our friends or family members face a health issue, we naturally want to support them. We just may not know exactly how to help. Below is a list of concrete ways that you can offer to support your loved one through their gender affirming surgery and recovery.

### **Start with the basics**

Before surgery, help your loved one prepare for their return home. This may include helping them clean or declutter their space so they can return to a calm and safe living environment. You might want to help with grocery shopping or help preparing nutritious meals that can be frozen and heated later.

### **Take on household chores**

For the first few weeks post-discharge, your loved one will need help with basic household chores. You might want to ask if you can assist with them. This might include grocery shopping, cooking, housekeeping, and pet care.

### **Assist with medical appointments**

Until your loved one can resume normal daily activities, they may need helping driving to and from their medical appointments. Make yourself available for help with transportation.

### **Keep a running list for medical professionals**

There is a significant amount of information that is provided to any patient upon discharge from surgery. It is difficult to remember all the questions patients want to ask their doctors. Help them by keeping a running list of questions or concerns that they want to discuss with their doctors, nurses, therapist or other medical or health professionals.

### **Watch for changes**

You provide an important role in helping your loved one heal during their recovery. Keep an eye out for changes that others—including the patient—might miss. Although not expected, any complications from surgery and side effects from medication must be addressed promptly.

### **Provide emotional support**

Many patients have been looking forward to this surgery for years. But that does not mean that their recovery from surgery will be free from feelings of frustration, fear, or doubt. Ongoing support and encouragement will be very helpful during this process.

### **Take care of yourself**

Being a caregiver can be an emotionally and physically draining task. Clear and direct communication will be helpful. Take time for yourself during this process, too. Make sure that you have scheduled breaks, free from these temporary responsibilities.

# FAQ Sheet - FMLA

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## What is FMLA?

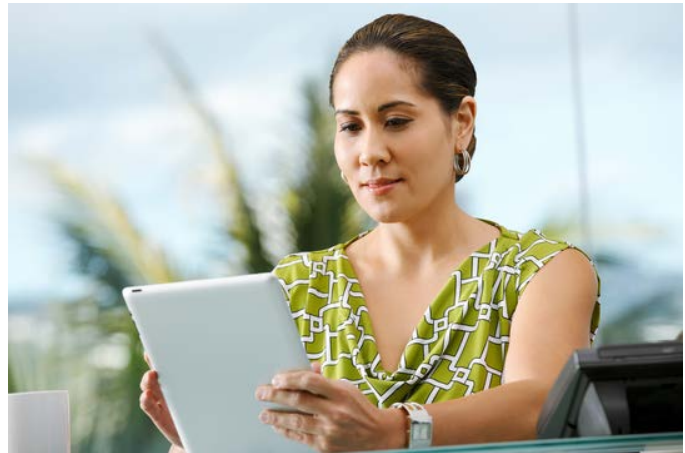
**FMLA** refers to the Family Medical Leave Act, a federal law that guarantees certain employees up to 12 workweeks of **unpaid leave** each year with no threat of job loss.

You **do not need** to disclose the procedure or surgery details for FMLA. You only need to say you are having a **medically necessary procedure**.

Your employer **may require** you to take sick time, personal time, or vacation time during your leave.

You might decide to use time you have accrued so you continue to get paid during your leave.

If you are planning multiple surgeries within a year and are concerned about exceeding 12 weeks of leave, ask your employer to confirm the start and end date of your FMLA year.



## Am I eligible for FMLA?

- You have worked for your employer for at least 12 months
- You have worked for your employer for at least 1250 hours in the last 12 months
- Your employer has 50 or more employees within 75 miles of your job
- You are automatically eligible for FMLA if you are a state, local, or federal employee.

## How do I apply?

- At least 30 days before your leave, contact your human resources department and/or supervisor and tell them you will be taking FMLA leave.
- Obtain documentation of your medical leave from your surgeon in your medical record.
- Contact the KP Release of Medical Information department to complete the FMLA forms required by your employer.



# FAQ Sheet

## State Disability Insurance (SDI)

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### About SDI

**California State Disability Insurance (SDI)** provides temporary income replacement to eligible workers who need time off of work.

SDI benefits may be available to you following your surgery.

### To learn more or apply visit:

[www.edd.ca.gov/disability](http://www.edd.ca.gov/disability)  
or  
call 1-800-480-3287

### What is SDI?

SDI is a temporary income replacement program

- SDI is a temporary income replacement state benefit that is payable for a maximum of 52 weeks
- Your weekly benefit amount is approximately 60-70% of your income (some exceptions apply). SDI is not taxed.
- Weekly benefit amount is calculated based on wages earned 5-18 months prior to claim start date..
- Upon approval, you will receive a **debit card** and an account where your benefits will be deposited.

### Am I eligible to receive SDI?

To receive SDI benefits, you must:

- Have paid at least \$300 in wages towards SDI contributions.
- File your claim within 49 days of your surgery.
- Serve a seven-day, non-payable waiting period.

Your employer may require that you use all your accrued sick or vacation time before SDI benefits take effect.

You do not need to be employed to collect SDI, if you have paid into SDI in the 5-18 month base period prior to your claim date. You cannot collect unemployment AND SDI at the same time.

### How do I apply for SDI?

- Ask your surgeon to complete a “Work Activity Status Form” in your medical record before surgery indicating the dates of your leave from work.
- Complete your SDI application online or by mail *after* surgery. You will be given a registration number when you complete your application.
- Contact the KP Release of Medical Information Department and provide them with your registration number. This department will complete the provider portion of your SDI application.

# The Importance of Self-Care

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## About Self-Care



Making sure that we take time for ourselves is one of the most important aspects of living a full and emotionally healthy life. Often these activities of self-care are the first things that drop off our daily “to-do” list when life gets stressful. Practicing self-care can be very helpful as you heal and recover after surgery.

### What is self-care?

Self-care is any activity that you consciously do to tend to your mental, emotional, and physical needs. They are fun, enjoyable, or relaxing activities that replenish you. You may already do these activities without labeling them as “self-care.”

### What are some barriers to self-care?

You might not engage in activities of self-care for a variety of reasons. For instance, you may have received messages that self-care is selfish when in fact it is important to our health and wellbeing. You may be worried that you cannot afford certain types of self-care or do not have the time for them.

**Tips:** Self-care can take many forms and it’s ok to start small. Many self-care activities are free. Brainstorming a list of activities you enjoy is a helpful way to get started.

## Some Self-Care Activities

- Listen to your favorite songs
- Watch your favorite movie
- Engage your senses with relaxing scents; aromatherapy
- Read a library book
- Meditate
- Prioritize sleep
- Eat healthy, nutritious foods
- Cook something new
- Laugh with friends
- Write an uplifting letter to a friend
- Go for a walk
- Spend time in nature
- Start a craft project
- De-clutter your closet or home
- Have a picnic with a friend
- Add your own ideas to this list!

Try to complete **at least one** activity of self-care each day. Make sure it is intentional, replenishing, and enjoyable!

# Additional Resources

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## Resources for Name & Gender Marker Updates

- Monthly ID Clinic at Kaiser MST in Oakland for paperwork assistance. Call 510-752-7149 for details!
- Transgender Law Center: <https://transgenderlawcenter.org/resources/id/id-please>
- Trans Equality: <http://www.transequality.org/documents/>

## Guided Imagery Talks and Surgery Preparation Videos

### Kaiser Permanente Guided Imagery Podcasts

<https://healthy.kaiserpermanente.org/health/mycare/consumer/health-wellness/live-healthy>

### Kaiser Permanente General Surgery Preparation Instructional Videos

<https://thrive.kaiserpermanente.org/care-near-you/northern-california/eastbay/departments/perioperative-medicine/prepare-for-your-procedure-with-emmi/>

## Emotional Support Resources

### Kaiser Permanente Psychiatry

Your local KP Psychiatry department can provide information about individual and group therapy and psychiatry services. You do not need a referral from your doctor in order to get services. Walk in assistance is also available in some locations during business hours.

### Kaiser Permanente Behavioral Health Care Member Helpline

Kaiser Permanente has an after-hours, weekends, and holiday phone number allowing you to reach out and talk to a licensed mental health professional. If you find that you are experiencing an emotional crisis, call **1-866-453-3932**

### Outside Resources

**Trans Lifeline:** 1-877-565-8860

**The Trevor Project:** 1-866-4-U-TREVOR (866-488-7386) (Online chat also available)

**The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline** at 800-273-TALK (8255)

**Crisis Text Line 24/7:** Text Home to 741741

### Resources for Family and Friends:

- **PFLAG** “Our Trans Loved Ones” Online Resources
- **Gender Spectrum** -> Resources -> Parenting and Family
- **Oakland MST Department Support Groups**
  - Parents Support Group / Partners Support Group