

Some transgender, gender diverse, or non-binary people choose to use a practice called tucking to give a flatter appearance in the groin. This handout is provided to help you understand the benefits and risks, how to safely tuck to protect your body, and how to prevent or minimize side effects or risks.

We recognize that not everyone identifies with the words we use in this handout and may not refer to their own body parts with these words. To describe this practice, we use the anatomical words penis, testicles, and scrotum for the parts of the body that people tuck.

What is tucking?

- The practice of tucking is when a person moves their genitals (penis, testicles, or both) so that they are less visible in tight clothing, to reduce the contour (bulge) of their genitals, and to create a flatter and smoother appearance.

Why tuck?

- This is a gender-affirming practice that can help reduce or relieve gender dysphoria and allow a person to wear more gender-affirming clothing. Some people tuck to wear drag or perform in drag shows.
- It can be critically important to the mental health of transgender, gender diverse, and non-binary people. It can help reduce the concerns you have about your body, can help you feel safe, and more comfortable in the clothes you wear.

How do I tuck?

There are several different methods to safely tuck. The important thing to remember is to try it when you will be home for short periods of time and try different ways of tucking until you find the one that is most comfortable for you. Trying it at home first will help you feel more comfortable until you get it right. **Always remember, if anything hurts, stop immediately and return after a break. Do not force any part of your body to move into a painful position.** Talk with your doctor or other healthcare provider before beginning to tuck.

- Tucking your testicles:
 - Some people prefer to have a flatter frontal appearance and choose to tuck their testicles inside the inguinal canal. The inguinal canal is a space above each of the testicles where testicles go naturally when cold. Others do not do this and simply move everything back to secure. If you choose to tuck your testicles, follow the steps below.
 - To tuck your testicles, GENTLY guide the testicles up with two or three fingers into your body. They will pop into two sockets of the inguinal canal.

Tucking

- If you feel faint, nauseated, or have extreme pain, stop, and take a break. It may feel strange or uncomfortable at first, but you should not have pain.
- When untucking, you may need to gently guide the testicles out with your fingers.
- This type of tucking has not been studied well and may come with additional risks. Talk to your gender clinic medical provider before attempting this style of tucking.
- Tucking using an undergarment:
 - Some people wear tight underwear to tuck while others wear a special supportive undergarment called a gaff.
 - Steps:
 - Before putting your testicles inside your body, lay down and pull on your undergarment halfway up your legs.
 - Follow steps above for tucking your testicles inside your body (if using this method).
 - Pull the penis and scrotum back between your legs and hold in place.
 - Slide your undergarment up so that it holds the tuck in place. You may need to do some adjustment for comfort.
 - If you feel pain, stop, untuck, and give yourself a break.
- Tucking using tape:
 - Tucking with tape is more secure and is less likely to come undone. However, this method has more risk of skin irritation and is harder to use the bathroom because you must take off the tape and then reapply.
 - Always use a medical grade tape from a pharmacy or medical professional. DO NOT use packing tape, duct tape, or any other tape that is not meant for use on skin. T-tape is a specific kind of tape made for tucking.
 - Remove or trim body hair so that removing the tape is less painful. Use oil or soak tape in warm water to help remove the tape. Go slowly and gently when removing tape.
 - Steps to tuck with tape:
 - Wrap or cover the penis in tissue, a soft, thin cloth, or cotton pad.
 - Tuck the testicles out of the way as described above (if using this method).
 - Gently pull the penis and scrotum between your legs.
 - Take a long strip of tape and place it from just above the genitals, down and up the lower buttocks/lower back area to keep things securely tucked between your legs.
 - Some people also like to use two additional pieces of tape next to the original tape for extra security.
 - Put on a pair of tight-fitting underwear.

Is it safe to tuck?

As with any intervention, there are risks and side effects. Below is a list of some of the most common. In this section, we will discuss the risks, side effects, and how to prevent them. If experiencing a lot of side effects from tucking, consider alternatives to tucking like tight fitting underwear or wearing looser clothing, like dresses and skirts, or loose pants so that untucked or loosely tucked genitals can't be seen.

- **Infertility:** Some professionals believe that tucking of testicles into the inguinal canal can cause a decrease in fertility (lower sperm count) because of the increased temperature. Discuss this with your gender clinic health professional before beginning this practice.
 - Limit the amount of time you tuck to reduce this risk.
 - If this is a big concern, consider sperm banking as a way to preserve your fertility.
- **Testicular pain or torsion:** Tucking for too long can cause pain in the testicles or torsion (pinching off of the blood supply to the testicle causing inflammation). If you experience pain when tucking the testicles, see a doctor to make sure this has not happened.
 - Following the steps carefully and listening to your body can prevent this from happening.
 - Reducing the amount of time you are tucked and how often you tuck can reduce this risk.
- **Skin issues:** Chaffing or skin irritation can be caused by using tape to tuck. Sweat from wearing a tight undergarment can cause skin irritation.
 - Taking breaks from tucking allows your skin a chance to recover.
 - Do not play sports or sleep while tucked to allow your skin to stay dry and breathe. Try to using baby powder to keep the skin dry.
 - Use medical grade tape to reduce the risk of skin irritation.
 - Clean and dry your skin thoroughly after removing the tuck.
- **Urinary tract infections:** Using tape to tuck creates a situation that makes you more at risk for an infection in the urinary tract because you must un-tape every time you need to use the bathroom. Do not avoid using the bathroom because you do not want to un-tape. This can lead to infections and problems going to the bathroom.
 - Use the bathroom immediately before you tuck and bring supplies with you to re-tuck after you are finished using the bathroom throughout the day.
 - Do not limit the amount of water you drink when you are tucked to prevent needing to go to the bathroom. This can make you more at risk of having urinary tract infections.
 - Consider methods of tucking that do not use tape so that you do not need to re-tape every time you use the bathroom.

Where do I find supplies for tucking?

- **En Femme:** A website devoted to trans women who needed specialized clothing and products to express their true selves including body shaping wear and tucking garments. <https://enfemmestyle.com/collections/gaffs>
- **LeoLines:** An Etsy shop that offers affordable gaffs and underwear for tucking including products that are designed specifically for children with tucking needs. <https://www.etsy.com/shop/LeoLines>
- **Origami Customs:** An online company that sells gaffs and underwear designed for tucking. <https://origamicustoms.com/>
- **Point of Pride:** Provides free femme shapewear (specially-designed compression underwear/gaffs) to any trans femme person who needs one and cannot afford or safely obtain one. <https://www.pointofpride.org/free-femme-shapewear>
- **SheBop:** Two stores in Portland that sell gender expression items. The stores are for ages 18 and over but will take appointments for those younger than 18. Make an appointment by emailing: info@sheboptheshop.com
- **Sock Drawer Heroes:** An online shop with gender a large assortment of gender affirming clothing including sizes for kids. <https://sockdrawerheroes.com/collections>
- **Spanx:** Control undergarments and compression shorts sold online and at retailers. <https://spanx.com/collections/shapewear>
- **TomboyX :**An undergarment company that makes tucking briefs that offer compression and breathability. <https://tomboyx.com/collections/all/products/tucking-bikini-black>
- **Unclockable:** Makes tucking specific tape that includes a cotton pad for the more sensitive parts. <https://unlockable.com/products/flawless-tuck-kit>

References:

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