

CHEST BINDING FACT SHEET

GLYS Western New York, Inc.
Growing LGBTQ+ Youth Support



What's a binder?

Binders can help youth who were assigned female at birth have a more masculine chest contour. Usually made of thick spandex and nylon, binders resemble tight undershirts which compress the breast area.

What are some things I should do when wearing a chest binder?

Listen to your body, and give yourself as many breaks from binding as you can. When you take your binder off, take a deep breath, stretch, and cough. Wash your chest binder regularly -- hand washing and hang drying will extend the life of your binder, but make sure your binder is completely dry before you put it on!

What are some things I shouldn't do in a binder?

Don't bind using Ace bandages or duct tape, don't sleep in your binder, limit binding to 8-10 hours a day, don't put on your binder while it is wet or you are wet, don't wear two binders at once, and don't wear a binder that is too small (Sohn, 2019).

Where can I get a binder? Can I make my own?

There are many online companies which sell and give-away/donate binders. Binders usually cost around \$30.00. Gc2b, Underworks, and Shapeshifters are three binder manufacturers that make high-quality chest binders. Trying to make your own binder is not recommended since homemade binders could cause harm to you and your body.

How do I know what size binder to order?

There are many YouTube videos of young people demonstrating how to measure yourself for a binder and how to order one. They also provide tips on how to put them on if you have a large chest or any type of medical condition which might make it hard for you to put one on. If you are not sure, contact the maker of the binder or see if they have a size guide available for reference.

What are warning signs that my binder doesn't fit correctly or that I've been wearing it too long?

You should be able to take a deep breath while wearing your binder. Binders can cause numbness in your hands or arms, skin irritations or damage can occur. Back pain, overheating, chest pain, fluid build up in your lungs, shortness of breath, bad posture and lightheadedness may also occur (Sohn, 2019).

What are the positive effects of binding?

Many youth find their moods are more positive, they have a more positive self image and body image, and their gender dysphoria lessens.

Reference:

Sohn, A. (2019, May 31). Chest Binding Helps Smooth the Way for Transgender Teens, but There May Be Risks. Retrieved October 29, 2020, from <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/05/31/well/transgender-teens-binders.html>

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