Cure for inverted nipples? [1]

Alice,

I am a male with inverted nipples.

I was wondering if there is any way without surgery to make them come out. They do sometimes come out when it's cold, but go straight back in. I am not overweight, but I do no sports. Would physical activities help???

Please answer my question as it's embarrassing to take my shirt off in front of others (except in winter).

— Jr inside out

Answer

Dear Jr inside out,

There are different kinds of inverted nipples, and some of them may provide various information about your health. Some people may be born with inverted nipples, while others may find that their nipples invert over time. Although you note that they project forward when it’s cold, the only way to permanently change the inversion is through surgery. Physical activity won’t change the direction of the nipple, but it can certainly be beneficial for your overall health. Want to know more about nipples and the many directions they can take? Keep on reading!

Did you know that there are multiple ways that the nipple can face inward? The first is a nipple inversion, in which the entire nipple pulls inward. The second is a nipple retraction. In this case, only part of the nipple pulls inward. A single duct pulls it in, which causes the nipple to look like a slit. Additionally, there are different levels of how inverted or retracted a nipple may be, as some people may be able to gently nudge the nipple and have it project outward, while others may not be able pull the nipple outward at all.

Have you always had inverted nipples? If you were born with them, they’re generally benign. In some cases, they may be associated with some genetic disorders. Nipples that invert later in life, on the other hand, may be a sign of a more severe medical condition. The primary reasons that
they would invert would be after the result of surgery, if there is inflammation of the ducts in the areola or the nipple itself, or if there is a malignancy in the breast. The research on these conditions has been limited in recent years, and the research that has been conducted in the past didn’t indicate specifically the sex that the patients were assigned at birth. If your nipples have inverted more recently, you may want to see a health care provider for them to do an assessment of the nipple and breast and to learn more about why they may have inverted.

As you mentioned, it's possible to change nipples that point inward to project forward through plastic surgery. Although studies on the effectiveness of these surgeries focus on those assigned female at birth, there has been some evidence from those studies that for some people, the nipple can invert again after the surgery. Your health care provider may have more insight about what a surgery may entail for someone assigned male at birth and the possibility of it inverting again.

Remember that inverted nipples are more common than you may think. Although you may feel embarrassed and want to change them, it may also help to think about why they make you feel that way. If you’re unable to make the changes that you’d hope to make with your nipples, you may find it helpful to embrace them as they are and focus on self-acceptance. It may help you overcome those feelings of embarrassment and feel more comfortable in your own skin.

Take care,

Alice!

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Medical Services (Morningside)
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