Dear Reader,

Many folks have a body part that isn’t counted among their favorites. When you make a change and don’t see results, it can be disappointing. The good news is that there are a number of ways to address your chest, while also helping you establish a healthy relationship with your body. And though supplements and severe caloric restriction (i.e., starving yourself) may seem to put you on track for fast results, they are not likely to be healthy or sustainable solutions. Shifting your focus from a quick fix to addressing some lifestyle adjustments (such as diet and exercise) may lead you to visible, lasting results. That being said, if lifestyle changes don’t seem to have any effect on the state of your chest, then seeking out the professional expertise of a health care provider may be a good idea.

Taking a look at your current exercise routine and diet may be a good place to start. Though these strategies may seem more intensive than taking a pill, getting active and eating a balanced and nutritious diet can improve your self-image and produce other benefits that extend far beyond weight loss. If you’d like to know a bit more about a healthy diet, check out What to eat? and Food guidelines — What is a serving? And, you don’t have to pay for a gym membership to get active, either! First, think about what types of physical activity you enjoy doing. Moving in ways that are fun and enjoyable will help you get active and stay active. Getting in about 150 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity on a weekly basis is recommended. Inexpensive or free options might include taking a stroll with friends, jogging or bike-riding outside, or working out along with an exercise DVD at home. Combine that with a couple weekly strength training sessions, and you’re on your way to seeing some results. For more inspiration, read I need an effective, short-term weight loss and toning plan.
If you’ve tried to get active and maintain a healthy diet but you’re not seeing results, making an appointment with your health care provider may be the next step. S/he can help you explore the possible causes of your man boobs and recommend treatment. A few medical conditions that can result in enlarged breast tissue in men include:

- **Gynecomastia** is an excess of gland tissue in a male’s breasts that can result in firm, breast-like tissue. This condition may be caused by hormone imbalances, which can be due to natural hormone changes during infancy, puberty or old age. The use of some prescription medicines, illegal drugs, alcohol, or medical conditions (such as tumors, hyperthyroidism, or malnutrition) may also be culprits. Though it may clear up on its own, if it doesn’t, or if it’s very painful, treatment may be the next appropriate step.

- **Psuedogynecomastia**, which is easier to understand than it is to pronounce, is an enlargement of breast tissue due to fat deposits (but not gland tissue).

Identifying and targeting the cause of your man boobs will help determine the appropriate treatment. Medication for breast cancer may be effective in some cases of gynecomastia. Surgical removal of tissues is also an option, which can include liposuction (which removes fat tissue) and mastectomy (which removes breast gland tissue). Either may be utilized to treat gynecomastia, but liposuction may be more appropriate for psuedogynecomastia.

Whether you’d like to further explore some do-it-yourself options with diet and exercise or to determine if your man boobs are a result of a medical condition, making an appointment with a health care provider might give you some direction to take further action. And, as you mentioned feeling low about the way you look, speaking to a counselor or connecting with a support group (particularly if you find that you do in fact have gynecomastia) might also help.

Alice!

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Nutrition & Physical Activity [8]  
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**Related questions**

- Man with "women’s" hips [11]  
- Men and body image issues [12]  
- Breast reduction surgery [13]  
- Natural lifts for sagging breasts? [14]

**Resources**

- Medical Services (Morningside) [15]  
- Counseling and Psychological Services (CPS) (Morningside) [16]  
- Medical Services (CUIMC) [17]  
- Mental Health Services (CUIMC) [18]