

LIVWELL
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SUMMER 2017

Transformations for
a Brighter Future

Work Out Anywhere

MISSION CRITICAL:
The Coastal Bend's Only
Level II Trauma Center

 **CHRISTUS
SPOHN**
Health System

Summer

2017



Each May, we celebrate National Trauma Awareness Month. During this month, we highlight the work of talented trauma teams around the country, educate the community about how to stay safe and help them learn when to receive care if and when trauma strikes.

We are about to kick off our busy season as care providers, with the summer seeing the most traffic through our Trauma Center — everything from motor vehicle wrecks, to sports injuries, falls and water related injuries.

But this year's Trauma Awareness Month is also special for the CHRISTUS Spohn Trauma Team because we are moving our trauma program to CHRISTUS Spohn Hospital Corpus Christi-Shoreline, bringing together for the first time the region's only Level II Trauma Program with the lifesaving technologies and specialists found at Shoreline hospital. It's an exciting time to continue providing care to all of the members of our Coastal Bend community at our Shoreline campus.

Inside this issue of *LiveWell* magazine, you will learn more about our Trauma Program and all of the different specialties and skill sets that work in harmony to create a continuum of care for our trauma patients. It's an honor to continue to serve our community as CHRISTUS Spohn's chief medical officer and trauma medical director.

Also, you will read a heartwarming story about a CHRISTUS Spohn nurse who inspired her daughters to follow in her footsteps, and meet a plastic surgeon who practices at CHRISTUS Spohn and plays a large role in reconstructive surgery for trauma patients.

We thank you for taking the time to learn more about the CHRISTUS Spohn mission to extend the healing ministry of Jesus Christ, and encourage you to contact us if you have a great story you'd like to see in *LiveWell*.

Best wishes,

Dr. Osbert Blow
Chief Medical Officer and Trauma Medical Director
CHRISTUS Spohn Health System

ON THE COVER:
CHRISTUS Spohn
Trauma Program



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Dog owners are 34 percent more likely to get the recommended 150 minutes of exercise each week, according to the *Journal of Physical Activity and Health*.



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Transformations for a Brighter Future

Often when people hear the words “plastic surgery,” they immediately think of cosmetic surgery. While cosmetic surgery is performed at CHRISTUS Spohn, plastic surgery covers a wide spectrum of surgical options.

“The word ‘plastic’ comes from the Greek word ‘plastikos,’ which means to mold or give form,” says Robert A. Fernandez, M.D., a board-certified plastic and reconstructive surgeon who practices at CHRISTUS Spohn Hospital Corpus Christi—*Memorial, Shoreline* and *South*. “So, the goal of plastic surgery is to improve form (how something looks) or function (how it works).”

Dr. Fernandez is one of four board-certified plastic and reconstructive surgeons on staff at CHRISTUS Spohn.

Board-certified plastic surgeons complete many years of training. Dr. Fernandez received his medical degree from the University of Texas Health Science Center School of Medicine in San Antonio in 1989. He completed a one-year internship in the department of

general surgery at the University of Texas Health Sciences Center in San Antonio, from 1989 to 1990. After that, he completed a four-year residency in general surgery at Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center in Lubbock. Then, he trained for two years in plastic surgery at Southern Illinois University in Springfield. He moved to Corpus Christi in 1996 to open his practice, and he received his board certification in 1999 from the American Board of Plastic Surgery. He’s been in practice in Corpus Christi for more than 20 years.

RECONSTRUCTIVE SURGERY

Plastic surgeons perform many kinds of procedures, depending on whether they’re doing reconstructive or cosmetic plastic surgery.

“On many occasions, I have seen former patients, for example at restaurants, and it is very gratifying when they go out of their way to thank me for taking care of them.”

— Robert A. Fernandez, M.D., board-certified plastic and reconstructive surgeon

“Basically, reconstructive plastic surgery is done to correct abnormalities — things in the body that are not normal or functional,” Dr. Fernandez explains.

A lot of reconstructive plastic surgery is conducted in response to injuries and wounds from emergencies and accidents. There is a

board-certified plastic surgeon on call at CHRISTUS Spohn 24 hours a day, seven days a week to respond to emergencies.

Reconstructive plastic surgery includes:

- + Breast reconstruction
- + Breast reduction surgery
- + Hand surgery
- + Skin cancer excision (removal) and reconstruction
- + Complex wound reconstruction
- + Scar revision (to improve the appearance of scars)
- + Reconstruction after bariatric (weight-loss) surgery

COSMETIC SURGERY

“Cosmetic plastic surgery is done on normal structures to make them look better or more aesthetically pleasing,” Dr. Fernandez says.

Cosmetic plastic surgery includes:

- + Breast augmentation
- + Tummy tuck
- + Facelift
- + Eyelid lift
- + Liposuction

- + Rhinoplasty (nose surgery)
- + BOTOX® injections
- + Filler injections (to fill wrinkles)

CORRECTING AND ENHANCING

Some plastic surgery procedures combine reconstructive and cosmetic plastic surgery.

“Although many procedures are considered reconstructive in nature, they often have an aesthetic component as well,” Dr. Fernandez says. “For example, the primary objective in breast reduction surgery is to reduce the size and weight of the breasts to alleviate back pain. There is often an aesthetic component as well.”

Skin cancer removal is another example of this combination. The surgeon removes the skin cancer but works to make the scarring minimal. Reconstruction after mastectomy also falls into this category. Breast reconstruction surgery helps many women feel confident after breast cancer surgery.

REWARDING WORK

Many health care professionals go into the medical field to help people and do work they find interesting and rewarding. In Dr. Fernandez’s case, his interest in medicine and exposure to surgery began at a young age, because his father was a family doctor who often assisted in surgery.

“When I was 7 to 9 years old, I did rounds with my dad, and at 13 and 14, I was in the operating room, observing,” Dr. Fernandez



says. “I’m particularly attracted to plastic surgery because of the variety.

“The most grateful patients are often the trauma patients. When you meet them for the first time, they’re often scared and vulnerable and don’t know how their injuries are going to impact their future. They’re simply going about their normal lives when they sustain their injuries,” Dr. Fernandez says. “On several occasions, patients who’ve sustained severe hand injuries will show me how much hand function they’ve regained. It’s at moments like this that I realize why I became a plastic surgeon. I consider myself very fortunate to be in a position to help these patients.” +

For more information about plastic surgery at CHRISTUS Spohn, please visit christusspohn.org and click “Services” then “Surgical Services.”