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The Science & Art Of Reconstructing The Human Body

Dr. Matt Bindewald brings reconstructive plastic surgery expertise to South Texas

BY CYNTHIA HUCHINGSON

THE TERMS PLASTIC SURGERY, reconstructive surgery, and even cosmetic surgery have amalgamated over time into a surgical melting pot that includes everything from the repair of congenital clefts to trauma reconstruction, cancer treatment, breast augmentation and Botox. With TV reality shows such as Nip/Tuck and Extreme Makeover publicizing only the most radical of cosmetic surgeries, we have been desensitized of our privacy and perhaps brainwashed over more than a decade into believing this is the new normal. Thus, the mere mention of plastic surgery tends to polarize us like the Capulets and Montagues.

But the science and art of reconstructing the human body is not only for 20-somethings wanting breast enhancement and extremists on TV reality shows, as Texas surgeon Dr. Matt Bindewald perhaps articulates best. “There is a midpoint of this spectrum of extreme views that is changing lives in a profound way. It may be quieter, but it is no less sensational,” Dr. Bindewald shares. “My goal is to make sure people have access to it.”

“Return to normal life.” That was the goal of one woman in her 50s who traveled to San Antonio from the Rio Grande Valley to have facial reconstruction following removal of a large skin cancer. After a single staged surgery and a few follow up appointments in the office, she is back to her work with young children with a near perfect result. Dr. Bindewald is sought out locally and nationally because his patients appreciate his organized, regimented, and efficient process, the ease of scheduling appointments and overnight stays when needed, and his reputation for being able to perform long, exacting and complex surgeries. They also value the privacy he affords them with their



decision. For example, Dr. Bindewald won't post your photo on his website to show others what you looked like “before” and “after;” he believes that the choice to have elective surgery is a personal one and not one that needs to be broadcast to the world.

Plastic Surgery—History, Science and Art

Plastic, reconstructive and cosmetic surgery evolved, in large part, from war. Surgeons were called on to reconstruct the wounded bodies of soldiers,

and over time, they made huge advancements in utilizing surgery to return both function and beauty to the human body. Reconstructive surgery is the practice of surgically creating or restoring function through application of deep understanding of the science and makeup of the human body. This requires an extensive knowledge of how the body works and the surgical precision to recreate its intended function. There is also an art in reconstructing the human body because the artist must really understand



the canvas on which they are operating in order to create a beautiful aesthetic that accentuates the new form and function. It is in this juxtaposition between art and science that Dr. Bindewald excels.

Not unlike the history of the specialty, Dr. Bindewald decided to become a plastic and

reconstructive surgeon because of his experience operating as a general surgeon in the military. He developed an appreciation for the life-changing effects plastic surgery could have on each of us, both physically and emotionally.

Understandably, trauma patients, breast cancer patients, and others have a primary

life-saving surgical need, so it is not always possible or reasonable to have reconstructive plastic surgery at the same time. New modalities and advancements in insurance, however, give patients flexibility and options, both concurrent with and subsequent to their original surgery. For example, thanks to some relatively recent advancements in the law, insurance companies are now required to cover the cost of reconstruction for any and all mastectomy patients, regardless of when they had their mastectomy.

Reconstructive, Cosmetic or Somewhere In Between?

Breast reconstruction after mastectomy, facial reconstruction after skin cancer removal, and scar revision surgery are good examples of surgeries that fit pretty neatly into the reconstructive plastic surgery bucket. In contrast, surgeries that only enhance our appearance, such as breast augmentation, Brazilian “butt lifts” and laser resurfacing, are pretty clearly cosmetic. Other surgeries, like breast lifts, “Mommy Makeovers,” and post-weight loss body contouring procedures often fit somewhere in the middle. There is an enormous population of people

“My goal is to make sure people have access to it.”



PLASTIC AND RECONSTRUCTIVE SURGERIES ARE NOT JUST FOR A SPECIFIC SEX, RACE, AGE OR INCOME LEVEL. PLASTIC SURGERY MEANS SOMETHING DIFFERENT FOR EACH PATIENT – SOMETIMES TO RESTORE CONFIDENCE AND GRACE, SOMETIMES TO CLOSE OUT AN OLD CHAPTER IN A PATIENT’S LIFE OR TO OPEN A NEW ONE. SOME PATIENTS HAVE SURGERY JUST TO FEEL NORMAL, AND OTHERS TO BE DIFFERENT. FOR ALL OF THESE REASONS, DR. BINDEWALD IS COMMITTED TO WORKING WITH EACH PATIENT IN DEPTH TO UNDERSTAND THEIR INDIVIDUAL NEEDS AND GOALS, AND TO ENSURE THE BEST CARE TO ACHIEVE THE ULTIMATE LIFE-CHANGING TRANSFORMATION. DR. BINDEWALD CAN BE REACHED AT 844.DR.MATT.B (844.376.2882) OR ONLINE AT WWW.MATTBINDEWALDMD.COM.

perfect place to start. Perhaps you have a complicated surgical request or are interested in combining multiple surgeries at once. Many patients have unique needs because of a previous surgery, their age, race, sex or other medical concerns.

Age, Ethnicity and Plastic Surgery

Twenty-year-old bodies heal differently than bodies in their 30s, 40s, 50s and beyond. Moreover, different ethnicities may have unique facial features and skin types. These differences can manifest in the healing process and need to be taken into consideration to ensure an aesthetically pleasing final result.

Surgical precision and functional understanding is key for specialists like Dr. Bindewald, who focuses his practice on more complex procedures and patient populations. The ability to carefully plan, focus, and operate for over eight hours at a time takes a special skill set that is not as common within purely cosmetic surgery practices.

How Do Patients Find Dr. Bindewald?

Although Dr. Bindewald receives many of his patients as referrals from other physicians—typically reconstructive cases for abdominal wall or hernia repair surgeries, facial reconstruction after skin cancer removal, breast reconstruction surgery, dog bite repair, facial fractures, wound management and trauma reconstruction—patients across Texas seek Dr. Bindewald online and schedule directly with him for his comprehensive skill at performing post-bariatric body contouring [the surgical removal of excess skin after extreme weight loss], complex breast reconstruction, breast augmentation, breast reduction, tummy tuck [abdominoplasty] and “Mommy Makeovers,” among others.

whose needs or desires for surgery are a little less outspoken or glamorous, but no less important, and an awareness of these options is essential.

Although the initial education and training for plastic and reconstructive surgeons is the same, most develop a niche. The niche may be purely cosmetic, mostly reconstructive or a mixture of the two. A physician’s advertisements, website, and office staff often provide great

insight into that surgeon’s personality and “typical” patient. For optimal outcomes, it is important that you try to choose a physician who focuses their practice in line with your needs.

Am I A Candidate?

If you have a question about a potential surgery, but you’ve always hesitated because you don’t think you are a “typical” surgical candidate, then a consult with Dr. Bindewald might be the