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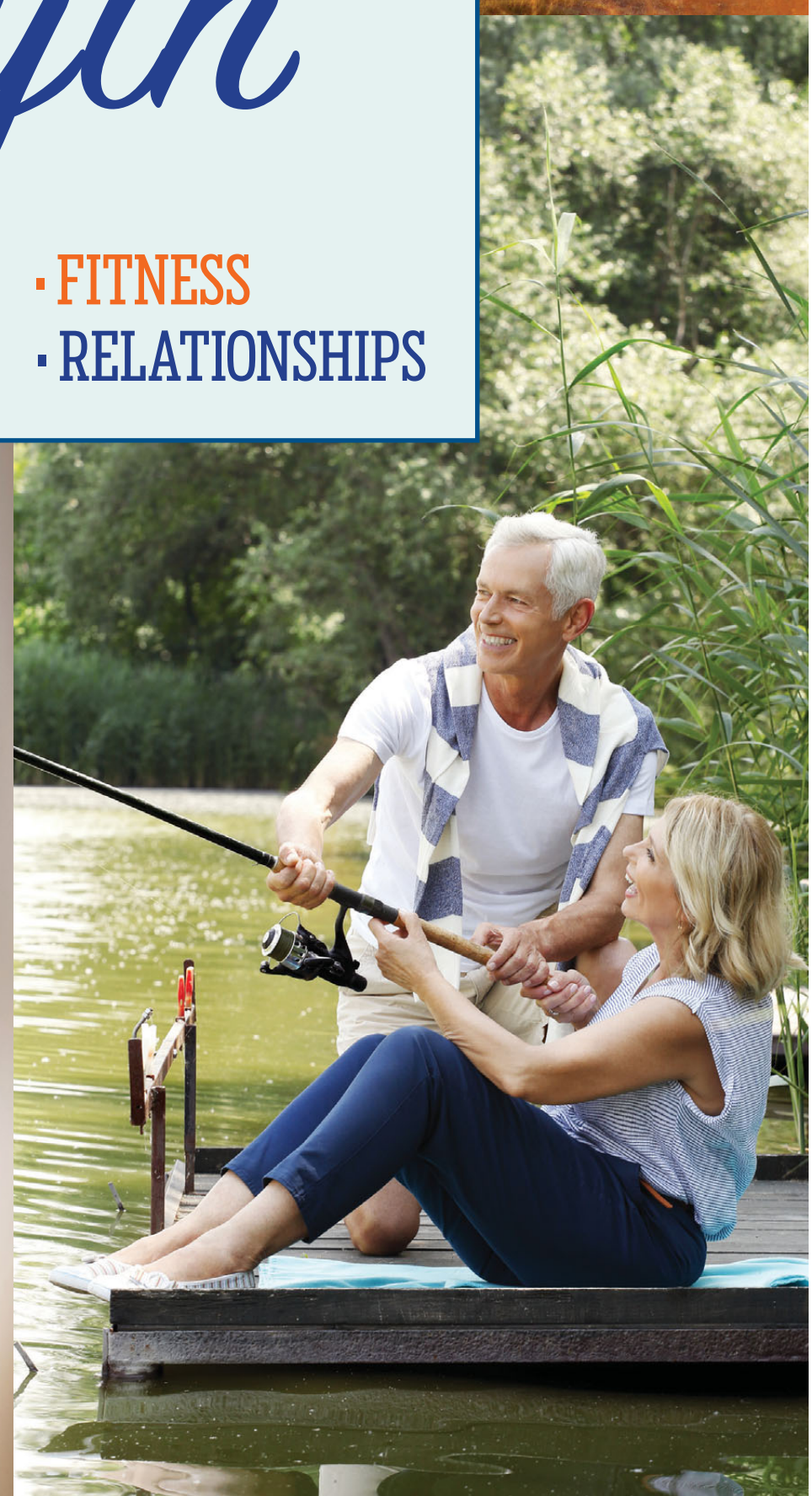
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*myth*

- SLEEP DISORDERS
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# DEBUNKING MYTHS ABOUT PLASTIC SURGERY

BY KAREN KIDD



**P**lastic surgery myths range from what the procedure actually is about to who really has it done but the truth has more to do with confidence and self esteem, according to an Austin-based plastic surgeon.

“You should only age the way you want to feel,” plastic surgeon Sanjay K. Sharma said. “Plastic surgery can help you achieve that, feel more confident and feel better about yourself.”

Sharma, in practice for 15 years in Austin, is founder of SKS Plastic Surgery on Austin Center Boulevard, an American College of Surgeons fellow and director of hand surgery at the Institute of Reconstructive Plastic Surgery of Central Texas. Sharma also is a clinical assistant professor at the Surgery and Perioperative Care Department at the University of Texas Dell Medical School.

## MYTH: PLASTIC SURGERY IS SYNONYMOUS WITH COSMETIC SURGERY

“Being a plastic surgeon doesn’t necessarily mean you’re a cosmetic surgeon and vice versa,” Sharma said. “To be a plastic surgeon actually means to be a surgeon who has had additional training, who is adept at taking care of all problems relating to skeletal, head and neck, really, everywhere along the body.”

Plastic surgeons often are thought of as “the surgeon’s surgeon” in the health care industry, Sharma said.

“Because they help bail out other physicians,” he said. “For instance, wounds that didn’t heal well or open fractures that have resulted in skin and muscle loss that will need to be closed in some fashion.”

There certainly is overlap between plastic and cosmetic surgery.

“Cosmetic surgery is part of what plastic surgeons do but the reality is that the plastic surgeon is certified by the American Board of Plastic Surgery, has to have a



**DR. SANJAY K. SHARMA, SKS PLASTIC SURGERY**

“There are a lot of ways to continue to appear young and youthful that involve noninvasive procedures.”

certain level of training beyond medical school that requires them to show that they are knowledgeable around all aspects of clinical care,” Sharma said. “That includes breast cancer diagnosis, skin cancer diagnosis, complex trauma, hand surgery and pediatric surgery as well as cosmetic surgery.”

The natural question follows about whether to see a cosmetic or plastic surgeon.

“If you see a plastic surgeon, know that you are getting the top of training that encompasses everything about anatomy of

the face, the breast, the body, wound healing characteristics and responses to injury. For instance, in liposuction, how to handle complications,” Sharma said.

## MYTH: PLASTIC SURGERY IS ONLY FOR VAIN PEOPLE

Plastic surgery is about helping the patient feel good about themselves, Sharma said.

“It’s not about vanity, it’s more about self confidence,” he said. “Greater confidence and self esteem provides more ability to engage in social situations.”

That positive self image is what plastic surgery patients are really after.

“For most patients we see here in Austin and in greater Texas, they just want to feel good about themselves,” he said.

## MYTH: PLASTIC SURGERY IS ALL ABOUT CUTTING

Not necessarily.

There are a lot of ways to continue to appear young and youthful that involve noninvasive procedures,” Sharma said.

Injectable neurotoxins, such as Botox, Dysport and Xeomin, for example, often can achieve what the patient wants outside of a surgical ward and without a scalpel making an appearance.

“You want to look as good and as young as you feel, so perhaps what you want is to blur the wrinkles around the forehead or around the eyelids,” Sharma said. “Neurotoxins can help to delay the signs of aging.”

## MYTH: WHEN THE PLASTIC SURGEON DOES CUT, IT’S ALWAYS DEEP

Many noninvasive and minimally invasive procedures now are available in plastic surgery, such as laser and non-surgical radiofrequency treatments.

“For instance, there’s a device called ‘cool sculpting’ that has been shown to be very effective in shrinking fat around the abdomen and the trunk to the degree,” Sharma said.

## MYTH: PLASTIC SURGERY WILL MAKE ME LOOK WEIRD

That is very unlikely.

“Today’s modern techniques and the use of conservative elevation of deep soft tissue, augmentation of the normal construction of the face really do make people look youthful without looking overdone,” Sharma said. “We don’t want to make the patient feel or look like they’ve been stretched. That’s just not the modern way of doing facial rejuvenation.”

