

Katie Johnson:

Good morning and welcome to Apple a Day, Lake Region Healthcare's health and wellness show, where we feature news and information you can use to live a healthier life. I'm Katie Johnson, your host, and my guest today is Dr. Chelsey Johnson. She's the newest member of the medical staff here, and we are so excited to be bringing her on board and starting a brand new service line of plastic and reconstructive surgery. And Dr. Johnson, so nice to have you on this morning and announce this exciting new service line to our community. Thanks for being here.

Dr. Chelsey Johnson:

Thank you so much for having me. I'm very excited.

Katie Johnson:

We are so glad to have you as part of the Lake Region Healthcare family, to welcome you back to your home area and to introduce you to our listeners and talk more about the services you'll be providing here at Lake Region Healthcare. But before we talk about what that is and what services you'll be offering, I'd really like our listeners just to get to know you a little bit better and hear about your background. Tell us a little bit about where you're from and what path you chose for landing on plastic surgery as your specialty.

Dr. Chelsey Johnson:

Yeah. So I'm originally from North Dakota. Grew up in Fargo. And throughout my childhood days, I just have always loved the science classes. So kind of thought medicine could be the way to go. I'm the first person in my family to do any kind of medical career. And so I thought the best way to get into it is just to delve into being a certified nurse assistant. So I became a CNA, and I worked actually at Bethany Homes in Fargo, North Dakota, and I was actually in the Alzheimer's unit. So I spent years there and absolutely loved it. So I loved caring for the patients, for the families. And to grow with that, I realized this is definitely what I want to do. It was medicine.

Dr. Chelsey Johnson:

So then I realized medical school was the next trip. So went and pursued my medical degree in Arizona. And then from day one, I saw surgery as something that I definitely could see myself doing. And so going through the different rotations initially, I was thinking maybe cardiovascular surgery then to neurosurgery and then maybe vascular surgery, but then landed on plastic surgery. So it was actually... I was rotating with a general surgeon, and we did a mastectomy after a breast cancer diagnosis. And then she had me stay and allowed me to stay and see the reconstruction after that. So that's my very first view of plastic surgery was being able to see that reconstruction. I was so excited about that, and then asked if I could join him the next day. And then the next day, he did a cleft lip repair on a baby. And so it was just so neat seeing the change you could make in someone's life. So drastic and instant. Was really gratifying to me. And that's how I realized that plastic surgery was my calling.

Katie Johnson:

So what did the training look like from there? It looks to me, at least on paper when I read your bio, like this is really extensive.

Dr. Chelsey Johnson:

It is. Yes.

Katie Johnson:

Yeah. So tell us what that looked like. What did it involve?

Dr. Chelsey Johnson:

Yeah. So I was fortunate. And right after I graduated from college... So actually, I did two years of college at NDSU, and then I got married, and my husband got transferred to Tucson, Arizona. So then finished my undergrad in Tucson, Arizona, and then was lucky enough to go straight on to medical school in Tucson, Arizona. Again, as I said, I realized a little bit later in the game that plastic surgery was 100% what I wanted to do. It's incredibly, incredibly difficult to get into and very competitive. So I took a year within medical school and went to Stanford, spent a year in California there and doing research with craniofacial sutures, and just being able to work with the other plastic surgeons there and see if this is truly what I want to make my career about.

Dr. Chelsey Johnson:

And it was, again, solidified that decision. And then after the four years of undergrad and then four years of medical school, that additional year, so another year at Stanford. And then going on to residency, I was able to get into an integrated position. So right straight from medical school, I was able to train to become a plastic surgeon. And then that was six years long. So it's been a long road.

Katie Johnson:

And from what I've read about where you did that training, it's a very highly-rated plastic surgery residency as well.

Dr. Chelsey Johnson:

Yes. Pretty amazing. So I matched at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center. That's in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. And just recently, it was always been in the top three residencies of the country, but this year, actually, just was ranked as number one. So it's the number one residency in the country. I'm very proud of that. So [crosstalk 00:05:11] achievement.

Katie Johnson:

Absolutely. As you should be. So all of that leading up to deciding to start your practice at Lake Region Healthcare in Fergus Falls, what made you choose Lake Region?

Dr. Chelsey Johnson:

Well, a few things. So I saw a need to provide my services. I saw that it wasn't being offered here. So that definitely made me then interested in Fergus Falls. And then my husband and I saw a community that we wanted to be a part of. To be honest, I've actually been visiting Lake Region for the past three years. So I've been in connection with Lake Region discussing if this is something that would be helpful to them, if this is something that I could benefit the community with, and then just to make sure that I'd be a fit. So it's actually been a conversation over the past three years to come here.

Katie Johnson:

That's really awesome. And let's talk a little bit more about the types of procedures that you plan to offer here. It's a pretty wide range, which is really exciting.

Dr. Chelsey Johnson:

Yeah. You are correct, Katie. It's a very wide range. So again, it's funny. We in our group of plastic and reconstructive surgeons, we see ourselves as the true general surgeon. We are taught to manipulate tissue from head to toe, the most complex cases to the most bread and butter, simple scar revision. So I really pride myself on that. And then honestly, it's just the diversity of care that I'm able to provide my patients is also just so gratifying. So yeah. So initially, when people think of plastic surgeon, of course, the first things that come to mind are cosmetic or aesthetic surgeries. They think of facelift. They think of a breast augmentation or a tummy tuck, and it is that. And that's amazing. It's so great. But it's so much more than that.

Dr. Chelsey Johnson:

So then honestly, it comes to other things like reconstructing after trauma or surgery. If there's a surgical complication from a prior surgery, we're also looked at as the surgeon's surgeon. So we're there to help other surgeons if they run into complications, if they have exposed hardware. Or [inaudible 00:07:28] orthopedic surgery, or vascular surgery, if they have an exposed center, whatnot. So different wounds, I also take care of as well. So it's a broad variety.

Katie Johnson:

Luckily, we have a nice resource that we're building for people to be able to read more online about all of the different procedures that you'll be doing and what's involved. You mentioned reconstructive surgery and the fact that early on, that breast reconstruction for a cancer patient was one of the things that really inspired you. I would imagine a close relationship will develop between you and our cancer center. Have you had some of those conversations and have any idea what that might look like?

Dr. Chelsey Johnson:

Yes. So again, what really pulled at me... Because breast reconstruction is just something that I've always really enjoyed from day one of my exposure to plastic surgery. And so seeing that I could fulfill a need there was really exciting to me. So yes. So we're hoping to be able to not only make it comprehensive care, but also very convenient care. So we're hoping to be able to actually align even just our clinic appointments from the diagnosis to then being able to [inaudible 00:08:47] with me as well, if you're interested in reconstruction, to go straight into that and not be left without any answers of what could be. So coordinating our patient care within the clinic as well as then obviously being able to provide that surgery within the same anesthesia time is always good and best for the patient in order to not have to go through multiple surgeries than they would have had, not have to wake up with absolutely nothing, and to be able to give them the best ability for healing.

Katie Johnson:

Yeah, absolutely. I think that that is just a really natural and a really beneficial extension of the cancer care. And like you said, that continuum, just providing the whole continuum from breast cancer diagnosis in the clinic all the way through. So I'm really happy to hear that. You touched on some of the other reasons for reconstructive surgery that we might not think of right away. Some other examples of those that you think might really fill a need here in the community that you'd like to talk about?

Dr. Chelsey Johnson:

Another passion I have is for reconstruction after massive weight loss. So people have had maybe an unhealthy lifestyle realize that it is so hard to lose all that weight. And then they do lose all that weight, and then they're left with excess saggy skin. That's very, very frustrating to them. They've done so much hard work, and then they're not feeling externally how they feel internally. And so to be able to match that is really satisfying. So doing a lot of reconstruction after just massive weight loss is one thing. I will also be available to be helping with any traumatic injuries. So injuries from trauma or from cancer reconstruction from years past or from yesterday. So both the acute and the chronic conditions.

Katie Johnson:

So nice to be able to offer things like this right here rather... So many things, it seems, that are that specialized involve a trip somewhere else. And to be able to offer it close to home is just really exciting. When it comes to the more elective surgeries that you'll be offering, the facelift, the tummy tuck, those kinds of things, how does someone know if they're a good candidate for a surgery like that? Maybe they've been thinking about it and just think, "Oh, I don't know if that's for me or not." What do you encourage people to ask themselves?

Dr. Chelsey Johnson:

Yeah. So number one is the reason why. So number one, you have to know why you're thinking about this. And it needs to be all about you. Honestly, it is, because it is, and it's your body and what your seeing that you want to change. And so it can't be what anyone else has been telling you or anything else that you think other people would prefer you to do or whatnot. So it has to be all about yourself and really to improve your own wellbeing. And then second of all, it is about health. So we all have to be at our tip-top game. It is still surgery, so there are still risks. And I need to provide the absolute best care possible not only to get the best outcome, but then also to have the best recovery. So being in good health and having... Even if you do have medical issues, that's fine. They just need to be well-controlled. And we can work with your primary care provider with that as well.

Dr. Chelsey Johnson:

Probably the biggest thing, I have to admit, we're all told this, but smoking is bad, and smoking makes things difficult with healing. So it's the nicotine that causes the constriction in the blood vessels, and you just won't feel well. So that's one thing that's really important. Any kind of tobacco product use needs to be stopped four weeks before. But then other than that, it's just having a consultation with me and discussing your options and seeing if this is the right thing for you.

Katie Johnson:

Right. Let's talk about where you'll be located at Lake Region Healthcare in the clinic and a little bit about what your team will look like here. That's really exciting too.

Dr. Chelsey Johnson:

Yeah. So I'll be on the first floor. So I'll be in the same area as the dermatologists and general surgeons, and we work really closely together. So that's great to be so nearby. And we'll see. I mean, hopefully this takes off and we can build a new building. That would be amazing. So that's my hope. But then, my team is starting off small. So I'm just beginning here and wanting to do it the right way. So starting with a small team. I'll have two nurses, and then I'm also looking for a patient navigator, a position that

becomes the patient's new best friend and helps them through the journey of surgery and just all their questions that come up before and after surgery and being my liaison between me and the surgery and whatnot.

Katie Johnson:

Sure. Sounds like a very exciting job opportunity if any listeners out there are looking for one.

Dr. Chelsey Johnson:

That's right.

Katie Johnson:

Yeah. Shifting gears just a little bit. We're all about patient-centered care here. We talk a lot about being centered on the patient and their family. And I know that that individual approach to a person's option is a key to how you operate your practice too. Maybe you could share a little bit more about just your general practice philosophy and the importance of that trust relationship that you need to have with a surgeon, and particularly with a plastic surgeon.

Dr. Chelsey Johnson:

Right. Yeah. I mean, we are all unique. So we all have our own past experiences, life struggles or adventures, goals, or future aspirations. So every patient requires that unique, individualized approach. One size does not fit all in plastic surgery even when you're talking about the same surgery, like a tummy tuck. A tummy tuck will look differently for each patient. And so again, just having the best approach for one patient isn't going to be the same for another. And the relationship I form with my patients then are extremely important. So again, we're going along this surgical journey together and we need to be able to provide the best and most safe outcome possible.

Katie Johnson:

One of the other things I've heard you say in the conversations we've had is your desire for a really natural look as an outcome. And I like that approach too. Maybe talk a little bit more about that.

Dr. Chelsey Johnson:

Yes. I think gone are the days, or at least what I feel like plastic surgery is of the really pulled and fully augmented and in-your-face plastic surgery. Gone are those days. We all want to age naturally. We all want to age beautifully. We all want to look externally how we're feeling internally. And so any way to be able to create that for you is why I'm here. And again, it also should be something that maybe your very, very close friends could potentially notice, or maybe even not. But as long as you notice it and it makes you feel better, that's the best.

Katie Johnson:

What about when you're not working or going to school? What do you like to do in your free time?

Dr. Chelsey Johnson:

Yeah. Love to cook. Love to cook and bake. That's probably one thing I miss the most. Every week, we would have a meeting with all the residents, and I'd always cook something. So love to do that. That then goes hand in hand with working out. So I've really gotten into spinning. So I did just get a spin bike

to have at home. And now, with Glendalough, I love that to be able to bike around. So doing that. And then just hanging out with my husband, Sean, and my parents and my brother.

Katie Johnson:

Awesome. Well, anything else you'd like us to know about your practice, about your background, things that you want to make sure our listeners know before we wrap up today?

Dr. Chelsey Johnson:

Yeah. I think the biggest thing I wanted to get across to the community is just that I'm here for you. And then I'm just so excited to be here and to help. So total open doors. Confidentiality is key as well. But just that I'm here to meet you and here to help in any way possible.

Katie Johnson:

And I guarantee you'll be delighted when you meet Dr. Chelsey Johnson. She is the newest member of our medical staff, as I mentioned, and we're just so excited to have her here on board at Lake Region Healthcare to be able to expand our services, to offer plastic and reconstructive surgery to our communities, and taking appointments. So color appointment line if you're interested. Consultation options are also available. Do you want to talk about what a consultation might look like and involve?

Dr. Chelsey Johnson:

Yeah. So again, because the patient is obviously my priority... And again, it requires a relationship to be formed. And so my consultations will probably be on the average of 30 minutes to even an hour to really get to know you and to make sure that we are both on the same page and talking the same language. And so I'm excited to provide that free of charge. So would love just to meet you and have any questions of yours answered that I could.

Katie Johnson:

So if you're interested in learning more, scheduling a consultation, give the clinic a call. It's the main clinic appointment line at (218) 739-2221 or check out the plastic surgery information on our website at [lrhc.org](http://lrhc.org). Dr. Chelsey Johnson, so good to introduce you to the community and to welcome you to Lake Region Healthcare today on Apple a Day. Thanks for making the time.

Dr. Chelsey Johnson:

Thank you so much. So happy to be here.

Katie Johnson:

Dr. Chelsey Johnson and Katie Johnson on Apple a Day today reminding you, there is so much to do here. Stay healthy for it. Have a great day.