



Christine Simpson

Simpson had not one, but two curves – one in her upper back and one in her lower back. Part of a military family, she would see specialists about her case as her family moved around Europe.

“I saw eight different surgeons in Europe,” Simpson recalls, “and they all said there was only one way to correct the scoliosis – an open surgical procedure that would have filleted me like a fish.” The thought horrified her, so she kept putting off the surgery and lived with the pain.

When a 38-year-old Simpson relocated to Western Washington, she consulted with Evergreen-affiliated spine surgeon Dr. Jeffrey Roh, of Orthopedics International. To her joy, Dr. Roh said he could fix her spine in a minimally invasive fashion.



Jeffrey Roh, MD

“In Simpson’s case,” Dr. Roh says, “most surgeons would have opted to use large and long incisions in both her front and back.” But Dr. Roh is part of a revolution in spine surgery. He uses minimally invasive techniques to achieve the same results – but with smaller incisions, less blood loss, less pain and faster recovery.

“Ninety-five percent of my surgeries are done in minimally-invasive fashion,” he shares. “I took the minimally invasive

techniques that I already knew how to do, and translated them into the open scoliosis surgery I’d been trained on, to come up with the surgeries I perform today.”

“I feel so lucky and so blessed that I found Dr. Roh.”

*Christine Simpson had lived with severe scoliosis since she was diagnosed at age 17. Scoliosis is a painful and sometimes crippling condition in which the spine is curved – it is shaped like an “S” or a “C.”*

#### QUICKER HEALING

That surgery involves two separate procedures, each lasting several hours. In the first, Dr. Roh makes small one to two inch incisions in either side of the chest or abdomen, depending on where the scoliosis curve is, to restore the disc space height and then grafts bone onto the vertebra so that when it heals, it forms one solid bone mass.

During the second procedure, Dr. Roh makes multiple small incisions in the back, incisions that are no wider than the diameter of the screws and rods that he places to actually correct the scoliosis and straighten the spine.

“There are only a dozen hospitals across the globe doing this type of scoliosis correction with minimally invasive surgery,” Dr. Roh states, “and I am proud to be at one of them. It is tremendously gratifying to be able to give our patients an alternative that’s going to help them heal quicker and improve their quality of life.”

#### “FINALLY RID OF THE PAIN.”

Christine Simpson was up and walking the day after her January 2008 surgery. She wore a brace for the first three months after her operation, and then had to be extra cautious for another three months. Her new upright posture has even added three inches to her height. “But the best thing,” she enthuses, “is I’m finally rid of the pain that was just getting worse every year. I feel so lucky and so blessed that I found Dr. Roh.”

*For more information on spine surgery at Evergreen, visit our Web site at [www.evergreenhospital.org/spine](http://www.evergreenhospital.org/spine).*