

THAT'S THE SPIRIT!

CHEER *perfection*

EAR, NOSE AND THROAT (ENT) SPECIALISTS TACKLE A WIDE ARRAY OF ENT CONDITIONS AND SCORE COUNTLESS VICTORIES OVER A HOST OF AILMENTS

Teachers rely on skill, experience and education to teach students, but a certain level of energy and the ability to talk throughout the day are also essential to their jobs.

Rose Mary Brown, a high school teacher and cheerleading coach, is enthusiastic about the care she received to alleviate her throat pain.



When Rose Mary Brown's sore throat reached the point where she couldn't swallow, eat or talk without pain, she knew the symptoms were not the aftereffects of dental procedures. "At first, I thought the soreness was related to some dental work I underwent, but the pain got worse and I couldn't even talk," explains Brown, a teacher and cheerleading coach at North Springs Charter High School. A referral to **Preston Imhof, D.O.**, an otolaryngologist—or ear, nose and throat (ENT) specialist—at DeKalb Medical finally gave Brown a diagnosis: an abscess in her throat. "One doctor I saw said the treatment had to be done in the hospital, but Imhof offered several options, including one he performed in the office," she says. After the abscess was drained with the use of an endoscope, Brown went home with antibiotics and started feeling better almost immediately. "I was able to drink the next day without pain and started eating soon afterward."

Allergy Testing

In addition to treating problems of the throat, ENT specialists also provide tests for specific allergies. Allergy testing is a crucial component of treatment of allergy symptoms as well as complications such as sinus infections. "Anyone who has a constant runny nose, nasal congestion or dry cough should be tested for allergies," says Imhof. "Once we identify the specific allergy, we can develop a treatment regimen to control symptoms." A combination of nasal saline irrigation and nasal steroids or antihistamines can control allergy symptoms for many people, and immunotherapy treatments, also known as allergy shots, can help people who need more intensive treatment. Seasonal allergies are common in Atlanta, but untreated chronic allergies can lead to sinus infections.

Although many people first visit their primary care physician for treatment of sinus infections, it is important to see a specialist if you have three or more sinus infections in a year, or if the infection lasts longer than three weeks, recommends **Shivan Amin, M.D.**, an ENT specialist. The first approach is medical treatment with specialized antibiotics tailored to the patient's specific infection based on results of cultures taken by the physician. "If surgery is required, the recovery time is much shorter and more comfortable than it used to be."

Headaches, sore throats and low energy levels were the symptoms created by George Streitenberger's chronic sinus infections. By the time he saw Amin, he had undergone a number of rounds of treatment with antibiotics. A CT scan ordered by Amin showed severe sinus blockage that prevented antibiotics from reaching the infection, so surgery was the best option for



Music teacher and euphonium player George Streitenberger received treatment for a chronic sinus infection.

Streitenberger. "I never had any pain and recovered quickly," he says. The best part about clearing up the chronic infection is that he doesn't lose his voice during the day. "I teach music in an elementary school and by noon each day, I'd have no voice left." The elimination of his infection and symptoms has made teaching throughout the day much more enjoyable, he admits.

Broad Expertise

While sinus infections, allergy treatments and care of throat and ear infections are common reasons people visit an ENT specialist, the actual expertise of the physician is much broader, points out Amin. "We are able to treat thyroid and parathyroid conditions, perform rhinoplasty, or surgery on the nose, biopsy potential facial cancers and perform reconstructive surgery following skin cancer surgery," he explains. Other ENT specialists, such as Amin, who have completed fellowship training in laser and cosmetic surgery, are also able to offer procedures such as facelifts, eyelid surgery and skin resurfacing as well, he adds.

The most important lesson learned through her experience is to listen to your own body, recommends Brown. "I knew something was wrong but assumed my problem was related to my dental procedure. I should have seen a specialist sooner to avoid the pain and discomfort I experienced."



NEED AN ENT? Drs. Preston Imhof and Shivan Amin are accepting new patients. To learn more about their practice or to make an appointment, go to www.atlantaentspecialists.com or call **404.596.4793**.

ENT Q&A

Q. WHAT IS OTOLARYNGOLOGY

Otolaryngology is the oldest medical specialty in the United States. Otolaryngologists are physicians trained in the medical and surgical management and treatment of patients with diseases and disorders of the ear, nose, throat (ENT) and related structures of the head and neck. The most common conditions for which patients see an ENT specialist are chronic sinus infections, allergy testing and treatment, hearing problems, tonsillitis and tumors of the head, throat and neck.¹

Q. WHAT SELF-HELP STEPS CAN MINIMIZE EAR, NOSE AND THROAT PROBLEMS?

There are several preventive steps to alleviate symptoms of ear, nose and throat problems:

- **Nasal irrigation**—Using a saline solution available in any pharmacy department to irrigate the nasal passages and sinuses removes dust, allergens and excess mucus.
- **Caffeine intake**—Eliminating caffeine in the diets of people with tinnitus, a hearing problem associated with ringing in the ears, can help by reducing the stimulation of the nerves in the ears.
- **Allergy tests**—Untreated allergies, seasonal and environmental, can lead to other problems such as chronic sinus infections. ENT specialists can identify specific allergens and recommend medications and techniques that eliminate or minimize allergy symptoms.

1. Reference: American Academy of Otolaryngology—Head and Neck Surgery. What is an otolaryngologist?