



the Trumpeteer

An Ear- Responsible Publication of Central Carolina ENT, PA

New Devices to help Patients Suffering from Chronic Sinusitis

Sinusitis is a very common problem, affecting 37 million people in the United States each year. Sinusitis can be caused by bacterial, viral, fungal or other microbial infections and the symptoms can be worsened by allergies, environmental irritants or structural blockages in the nose. Common signs and symptoms include:

- Facial pain, pressure, congestion or fullness
- Nasal obstruction or blockage
- Discharge of discolored mucus from the nose
- Discolored post-nasal drainage
- Loss or altered of the sense of smell or taste
- Headache
- Fatigue
- Pain in the upper teeth
- Cough
- Fever
- Bad breath

Many chronic sinusitis sufferers are treated with repeated courses of antibiotics, decongestants, steroids, antihistamines, nasal irrigation and various nasal sprays or other allergy treatments (such as allergy shots). Sometimes the infections are so chronic that these patients feel constant facial pressure and fatigue for such long



By: Dr Doris Lin

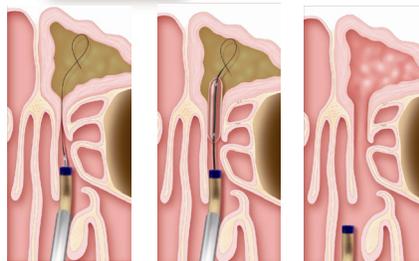


Fig. #1 Balloon Sinuplasty in the frontal sinus

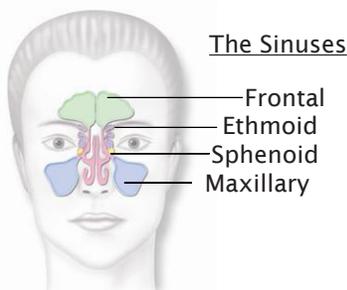


Figure #2

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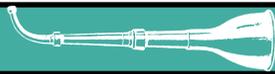
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periods of time they begin to feel "used" to it or forget what it is like to be without sinusitis. Surgery is often the next step but they may feel afraid or unsure of its benefits. These patients have already maximized their treatment of allergies or control of environmental irritants and would like to feel better.

Functional endoscopic sinus surgery (FESS) aims to relieve structural or mucosal obstruction of the sinuses with minimal damage to the rest of the nasal passages. The goal is to widen or open up the natural paths for sinus drainage. In chronic sinusitis, the natural openings of the sinuses are often narrowed or completely closed due to the inflammation from repeated infections, allergies, nasal polyps, or other structural abnormalities. Antibiotics given in this situation will kill the bacteria but the sinuses are unable to drain the fluid - leaving the patient with persistent symptoms of pressure and fluid in the sinuses that can become easily re-infected. In this case, opening the sinus is the only way to improve the situation. Once the sinus is opened during surgery, the sinus can also be washed out to help clear the chronic infections.

(continued on page 3)



Saturday Surgery and the Economy

William C. LeLiever MD, FACS, FRCS©

Well, this year we are all facing tough economic times and medicine is not excluded. The enormity of this problem is appreciated by our patients, ourselves and is global in scope. We have never seen a recession quite like the present one in our lifetimes. The list goes on including massive job layoffs, rising energy and food costs, housing collapse, banking collapse, economic freefall, declining business activity, bankruptcy, foreclosures to name a few.

We are all in this together and each one of us is doing what we can to hold the ship together in this storm. It has been tough for everyone over the past year. We are all fundamentally agreed that this current recession will be over and our economy and lives will turn around. The question is ...When? The answer right now from my perspective is... "no one knows."

For medicine and ENT in particular - people get sick, people get cancer, serious illnesses, injuries and have chronic conditions that require both medical and surgical solutions that can't wait for the economic recovery - if and when it happens. We need our health to be able to weather this storm. We need preventive maintenance too. Give serious consideration to stopping smoking, eating more vegetables and fruits, going on a diet, exercising on a *regular* basis, sleeping 8 hours at night time for starters and getting regular checkups for things like cholesterol, diabetes, heart disease, breast cancer, prostate and colon cancer.

Unfortunately, accidents and illnesses happen. We remain committed to seeing all of our patients in a timely manner and to doing what is right for our patients. We have been here for the last 22 years and plan for many more. Our office is staffed with the finest doctors, nurses, and office personnel in the state of North Carolina. We have an in office CT scanner and all the latest in high technology diagnostic testing that is available. We will continue to accept all current health care plans that we are contracted with. There will not be any change in our focus on *our* patients and the excellent care that we provide day to day.

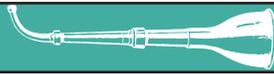
For 2009, we are offering ENT surgeries performed at Rex Hospital in Raleigh on Saturdays. This additional weekend surgery is for those patients who can not take time off work, for children where parents can't be absent from the workplace and for patients who have special needs and require weekend hospitalization. The surgeons are the same - we know that it is important to many of our "out of town" patients too. Ask our scheduler Lisa for details at 919 774 6829.

CCENT Surgeons operate at:

1. Rex Hospital Surgical Center, Cary, NC.
2. Rex Main Hospital, Raleigh, NC.
3. WakeMed Cary Hospital, Cary, NC.
4. Central Carolina Hospital, Sanford, NC.



Rex Outpatient Surgical Center



Mediplay Information System

By: William C. LeLiever MD, FACS, FRCS©

("Chronic Sinusitis", continued from page 1)

Some new tools in FESS allow the surgeon to treat the sinuses with minimal damage to surrounding tissues and organs. Image guidance during surgery allows the surgeon to bring an interactive computed tomography (CT) or magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) scan into surgery to help identify structures and steer clear of surrounding vital organs (such as the brain and the eye) to help make FESS safer (see article in July 2007 newsletter -<http://www.centralcarolinaent.com/webdocuments/Newsletter-July-2007-CCENT.pdf>)

A device called **Balloon Sinuplasty** consists of a small guide wire that guides a small balloon to enlarge the sinus opening (see Figure 1, page 1). Using the balloon to open the sinus rather than the traditional cutting instruments helps minimize trauma to the surrounding nasal tissue. The thin guide wire also aids in opening of some sinuses that can be harder to reach with traditional instruments such as the frontal sinus or sphenoid sinus (see Figure 2, page 1).

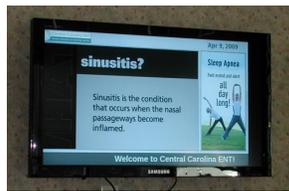
A new device called Stratus allows administration of medications such as steroids or topical antibiotics during sinus surgery directly into hard to reach sinuses. Both the Balloon Sinuplasty and Stratus devices may involve the use of fluoroscopy (an intraoperative real time x-ray) during surgery to confirm correct placement. With newer devices in the sinus surgeon's armamentarium, sinus surgery is safer and more helpful to chronic sinus sufferers.

Please discuss these devices with your surgeon to see if they are helpful in your individual case. All surgeons at CCENT are trained in image guided surgery, Balloon Sinuplasty, and Stratus.



Imagine if we can tell all of our patients a lot of information the minute they walk into the office. Now we can. Striking, professionally produced digital presentations inform and educate patients about our practice. We can inform our patients about an array of services that we offer, helpful hints on a variety of ear, nose and throat disorders, our doctors backgrounds and training, our office policies and much more.

Central Carolina ENT has utilized the Mediplay Information System since it's inception 5 years ago and is the first practice in the nation to use this system. These presentations are displayed on bright, wide HDTV screens, prominently placed around our offices. We are one of the first practices in ENT to recognize the need for "in office" direct communication to our patients.



Video display in Sanford office

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Initially, all of the productions were done via high definition video production work, produced, edited and displayed in our office waiting room. The effects on our patients were immediate. Both adults and children kept asking who was on the TV screens. Was that really the doctors here in this practice? Suddenly patients started asking us about our sleep and snoring program they saw in the waiting room. Others commented on the large inventory of hearing aids and our hearing programs. What a difference this communication system has brought to our practice.

Mediplay now has gone to a complete digital signage solution without sound and without all the work of the constant video productions. The product is frequently updated to reflect the changes over the year. For example, allergies are prominent in the spring and fall, vertigo is most common the summer months, and facial surgery is most commonly done in the fall each year.

Digital signage is the generic name of these systems and this industry is one of the hottest growth sectors sweeping the country. "Retailers and consumers aren't dumb. If you're in a retail environment two years from now that doesn't have a video screen, it's somewhat dated." Stephen Diorio, a partner with the marketing consulting firm Profitable Channels in Connecticut.

Digital Signage is a place-based messaging medium that communicates with practices using digital content delivered over high speed networks to "TV like" devices. Digital signs deliver dynamic and timely content to our practice using artwork, animation, video streaming, and presentations without sound. Our practice has a split screen format screen allowing portions of the screen to be changed daily by office staff. The major content is produced for each individual practice and Mediplay runs and monitors the screens. Gone are the days when you need to turn on the TV's.

The digital signage products are well known to the consumers and are not TV's with commercials. Well known examples are seen in sports centers, trade shows, restaurants, convention centers, shopping malls and now in physician offices. This is a powerful medium and really works to generate practice identity, educate our patients and promote our practice.



Buying Digital Hearing Aids Understanding All Your Options

By: J.P. Miller, M.S. CCC-A



National statistics on hearing loss in this country are startling. Nearly 4 out of 10 Americans will suffer from hearing loss by age 65; projections indicate that by 2015 the number of Americans affected by hearing loss will increase by 20 to 25 percent; and an estimated 10 percent of 40 year olds suffer hearing impairment (National Institute on Deafness and other Communication Disorders). Many of these individuals will turn to hearing devices to address this problem. But buying digital hearing instruments can be quite a daunting task as there are many important decisions that need to be made. This article will sort out the options that one must consider before making such important decisions.

When I first talk with a patient who is considering buying hearing aids, I first have them complete a short questionnaire. It asks the patient to circle a response (seldom, occasionally, often) to ten short questions which best describes their listening and lifestyle needs. A numeric score is then generated that indicates how sophisticated a digital processor the patient might need to achieve many of their hearing needs and goals. Now the processor information can be applied to three classes of digital hearing instruments: Automatic plus ultimate cosmetic appeal, totally automatic, and finally instruments that offer more control options such as multiple programs and volume controls. Let's examine each class to further clarify the considerations.

Automatic with ultimate cosmetic appeal

The patient wanting this type of digital hearing aid is usually driven by cosmetic appeal. They may not want people around them to know they even have a hearing loss and they sure don't want them to see that they are wearing hearing aids. Resound now makes a custom in the ear device call the BE (see January 2009 newsletter for more details) which is designed to fit deep in the ear canal. It currently is available in two processing categories, the BE9 (the best) and the BE7 (next best). A patented microphone sits in the outer curve of the ear to help reduce wind noise and allow the aid to have a huge air vent. These units are great for persons with high frequency hearing losses and normal hearing in the lower frequencies. Other custom completely in the canal devices can also be made for individuals with more severe hearing losses.

Totally Automatic

In this class of product, the patient is interested in a relatively small device with absolutely no controls. They want the digital device programmed for their hearing loss and not have to think about and pushing buttons or volume controls. Essentially they want to insert the aids and forget about them. One such unit by Resound is called the DOT. It is a very small behind the ear processor connected to the ear via nearly invisible clear thin tubing. The receiver or speaker actually sits down in the ear canal. Another similar unit is called a Pulse, as it runs on rechargeable batteries. The DOT is also available in three processing categories (best, next best, good).

Control Series

Some patients want more control over the operation of their digital devices. Some digital products offer multiple programs that can be customized for particular listening environments. For instance, in a restaurant a patient might want the aids to focus more on the person in front of them at the table. Engaging directional microphones lessens the noise beside and behind the person. A simple push button on the device allows easy access of this special program. Also many previous hearing aid users (especially the old analog users) want a volume control so that they can personally override the computer program and adjust the aids to their liking.

Your digital hearing options can be quite varied depending upon your listening needs and cosmetic options. Hearing aids are not covered by most insurances (including Medicare), and the final decision may come down to cost. CCENT's current prices vary from \$899 (each device) for the economy processor to \$2700 for the top of the line processor. Just about all the hearing aid manufacturers now offer an economy digital product that is a good quality unit but with limited features. With interest free financing available in most offices, there is absolutely no excuse why a patient should not get some hearing help. Consult your doctor, audiologist, or hearing aid dispenser and find out what will work for you. In North Carolina, it is the law that you be given at least a 30 day trial with your new hearing aids to see if you can adjust to them. Multiple visits may be necessary to fine tune the digital devices during the adjustment period. Don't miss the sounds of life any longer! Call one of our offices (Sanford-919-774-6829 or Apex-919-363-9311) today and set up your evaluation. Also visit our website to learn more about the digital products that are available.