

Sinus Surgery Alternative

Balloon sinus dilation is a simple, effective, in-office treatment for chronic sinus problems.

Many patients with sinus problems are familiar with the symptoms: a chronic stuffy or runny nose, headache, facial pain or pressure and perhaps a sore throat and cough from persistent postnasal drip.

With almost none of these symptoms except a little stuffiness in the morning, which she attributed to her asthma, retired registered nurse Michelene Valerus, 75, didn't realize that she had a severe case of chronic sinusitis. The condition progressed until it developed into a sinus infection early this summer that led to an acute case of *cellulitis*, a bacterial infection of the skin, on her face. She was hospitalized for five days.

"She had a sinus infection that was bad enough that it spread through the



Devang M. Shah, MD, is board certified in otolaryngology. After receiving his medical degree with honors from Robert Wood Johnson Medical School, New Brunswick, NJ, he completed his surgical internship and residency at Johns Hopkins Hospital,

Baltimore, in 1997. Dr. Shah is a member of the American Academy of Otolaryngology — Head & Neck Surgery and has served as the chair of the Department of Surgery at Florida Hospital Fish Memorial, Orange City. He is also the coauthor of several journal articles investigating the relationship between microscopic inner-ear structures and hearing function and has presented his work at various research conferences.

bone of the sinus and into the skin of her face," explains Devang M. Shah, MD, a board-certified otolaryngologist at Atlantic Ear, Nose & Throat. "That was treated with antibiotics, but there was still an underlying problem with the sinus that led to the infection."

ATLANTIC



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Michelene says the condition was not necessarily painful, but it was scary. "I couldn't even see or open my mouth because I was so swollen," she relates. "They told me that I could have lost my sight if the swelling went behind my eyes."

Once her infection was under control and she was released from the hospital, Michelene, who is originally from Haiti but has lived in Florida for many years, turned to Dr. Shah to treat her sinus condition. He determined that she would be a good candidate for an in-office procedure known as *balloon sinus dilation*, also called *balloon sinuplasty*.

In-office option

"The traditional approach to chronic sinus

problems is to go in there with a device and aggressively remove tissue to open up the sinuses, thereby allowing them to drain," describes Dr. Shah. "Generally, this requires that the patient is under general anesthesia, so it's a real surgery.

"In contrast, balloon dilation is done using a catheter to very gently dilate the openings of the sinuses without having to remove tissue, and that's the difference."

The outpatient procedure is completed right in Dr. Shah's office. With the patient under mild sedation, a balloon catheter is inserted into the affected sinus. Once in place, the balloon is inflated and expands the sinus opening, which is then flushed with saline. The balloon is then deflated, the catheter is removed and the sinus remains open.

Studies have shown that balloon sinus dilation, which was FDA approved in 2005, is just as effective as the traditional, surgical approach. "It is a nonsurgical, in-office procedure to open up the sinuses and allow them to drain in a natural fashion," explains Dr. Shah. "It improves sinus symptoms such as sinus pressure, sinus headaches and recurring sinus infections."

Moreover, most patients go back to their normal activities the very next day, so there is very little downtime required.

Michelene was very pleased with Dr. Shah and her care at Atlantic Ear, Nose & Throat. "He's very soft-spoken," she



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Michelene feels much better after balloon sinus dilation, an alternative to traditional sinus surgery.

describes. "He asked me if I had any questions and he would explain it. He was very, very pleasant."

Since having the balloon sinus dilation procedure completed a few months ago, Michelene is feeling much better. "Just by having it done, I feel better," she assures. "By golly, I feel better."

FHCN—Melanie Casey

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The skilled physicians at Atlantic Ear, Nose & Throat welcome your call. They are located in Lake Mary, Deland and Orange City. Call (407) 774-9880 or (386) 774-9880 for an initial consultation at any location.

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