

# PERSONALIZED HEARING CARE

Factory settings limit value of hearing aids. Customization can make all the difference.

"I've had hearing loss since I was about three years old," says Michael Jenkins. "One of the things I learned early on in life is that there's a wide range of quality and integrity in the hearing field, both in terms of products and the people who sell and service them."

ATLANTIC

Ear, Nose & Throat

DEVANG M. SHAH, MD

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"When I was a child in Harrisburg, in fact, my mom took me to the state hospital for audiological care: they didn't have a profit motive, and they really tried to give us the best service."

As an adult, Michael continued the tradition his mother started of seeking quality audiological care from people with demonstrated integrity.

"When I moved here, I didn't find what I was looking for until I met Dr. Samer. That was six years ago, and I haven't gone to anyone else since."

## Customization is key

Affectionately known to his patients as "Dr. Samer," Samer Abu Rahmeh, AuD, heads the audiology department at Atlantic Ear, Nose & Throat.

"One thing I tell patients up front is that hearing aids are like dentures: they can fit initially, but over time you have to adjust them. It's much the same with hearing aids," says Dr. Samer.

In Michael's case, Dr. Samer notes that the combination of attentive service and customized hearing care has kept him coming back to Atlantic Ear, Nose & Throat for years.

"As a younger person, Michael's lifestyle puts him in a variety of challenging listening



"They're the real deal," says lifelong hearing aid wearer Michael Jenkins of the audiology department at Atlantic Ear, Nose & Throat.

environments. He needs to stay with the best technology and have our option of personalized care so he's living up to his potential. It's great, because you wouldn't even know he's wearing hearing aids from talking to him."

Customization makes or breaks the success of a patient's hearing rehabilitation, concludes Dr. Samer.

"If patients' hearing aids are set at the manufacturers' settings, they may get only a minor amount of benefit from hearing aids. Just a little bit of customization makes a huge difference.

"New patients see our ENT physician first to determine the cause of hearing loss," he adds. "Once our physician determines that a hearing aid could help, I work with the patient to determine which hearing

instrument is best suited for their needs."

"Hearing loss can be caused by an underlying medical condition, for example, an acoustic neuroma or middle ear effusion, which a physician can diagnose," observes board-certified otolaryngologist, Devang Shah, MD. "These types of problems need medical attention and sometimes can be cured. In addition, some types of hearing loss cannot be solved with a hearing aid. We test for that in our office before having patients see our audiologist. Because the physician and audiologist work closely together, the process is comprehensive and seamless for patients."

## True professionalism

"Dr. Samer is a medical professional,

not just a hearing aid salesman," Michael assures. "He's a very patient, concerned audiologist. I've purchased several hearing aids from him over the years, and he's very informed, flexible, and willing to work with you. If you need to make changes, he takes care of that. And if something's broken, he takes care of that, too."

Michael emphasizes that potential patients can trust the skilled staff of Atlantic Ear, Nose & Throat.

"They're the real deal," he says. "They have high-quality products, they're very qualified, and they treat you the way you'd want to be treated by a health care professional. They're just top-notch, very good people." *PHOTO—Michael J. Salmo*

## For Audiological & ENT Expertise

The skilled physicians at Atlantic Ear, Nose & Throat welcome your call. They are located in Lake Mary, DeLand, and Orange City. Call (407) 444-5225 or (386) 774-9880 for an initial consultation at any location.



**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.

## Allergy Drops: Convenient and Effective

Patients experience faster relief, a lower risk profile, and fewer office visits with allergy drops.

Since childhood, Charina Cross has suffered with seasonal allergies related to molds and dust. But like many children, she feared shots. "Allergy drops weren't available back then, so growing up I sneezed for half the year," says Charina.

"I would start sneezing as springtime approached, usually as early as February and lasting through June. Then again in the fall, typically September through November."

As an adult, Charina looked for solutions as her symptoms worsened. "The allergies definitely were draining me, making it impossible to enjoy doing anything outdoors. I was also getting a lot of stuffiness along with sinus pressure and headaches."

Her family physician suggested it may be sinus related and recommended she consult Dr. Shah.

### Sublingual immunotherapy

"At times," says the doctor, "patients will choose to treat allergy symptoms with medications such as nasal sprays or antihistamines. However, recently, many of our patients are opting to address the underlying causes of allergy and achieve long-lasting relief with sublingual drop therapy."

Allergy drops have distinct advantages over allergy drugs or injections, explains the doctor. "Drops are administered by the allergy sufferer under the tongue at home in gradually increasing dosages. Consequently, patients don't have to come to the office on a weekly basis for treatment. Also, allergy drops have a substantially lower risk of severe adverse reactions, such as anaphylaxis, compared to injections," confirms Dr. Shah.

"We can ramp up to a therapeutic dose more quickly. Whereas it might take a year to get to an effective dose with injections, patients can be up to an effective dose in ten days with drops."

And a major advantage for children: the allergy drops taste sweet because of the way they're prepared, so it's much easier to get a child to take them than

to undergo a weekly injection.

"It's an enormous difference, so we consider drops to be a much more compelling type of treatment," says the doctor. "The risk of side effects is less, especially because you can get to an effective dose so much faster. Because of that, more patients will get to a maintenance dose, experience the benefits, and hopefully continue with treatment. With allergy shots, many patients drop out, frustrated by getting an injection every week for a year and not reaching a dose that's effective."

Although some other practices offer allergy drops, only Atlantic Ear, Nose & Throat offers the ten-day escalation as recommended by the American Academy of Otolaryngic Allergy.

"This is an exciting new option in the treatment of allergy that previously hasn't been available," affirms Dr. Shah. "It's a great alternative, particularly for patients who don't like getting injections or who have not benefited from them."

Charina is happy with the results of her sublingual immunotherapy. "I noticed relief within the first month of taking the drops. After a year of the sublingual therapy, I find I can now jog and go for walks outside with my dog without sneezing. And I have so much more energy now."

"Dr. Shah and the staff at Atlantic were very helpful and good to work with; I'd recommend them to anyone who has allergies," concludes Charina.



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