

**M**ost retirees move to Florida for the weather. Not Susan Robertson. When she retired from her job as a communications consultant a few years ago, she moved to Florida to be closer to her daughter and two grandchildren.

“I just wanted to be closer to those kids,” says Susan, a Memphis, Tennessee native who, despite waging a year-long battle with an aggravating throat issue, has greatly enjoyed the time she’s spent with her family.

“The medical problem I had was this very annoying, little cough and scratchy throat. I was always having to clear my throat,” Susan says. “Because of that, I was very hoarse and hard to understand.”

Susan battled the issue for several months before seeking medical attention, but the first two doctors she visited couldn’t resolve the problem. She then visited Atlantic Ear, Nose & Throat in Lake Mary, where she was seen by Devang Shah, MD.

Dr. Shah started his work with Susan by performing a sinus scan, which showed her sinuses were clear. He then examined her larynx using a fiberoptic scope. Like the sinus scan, that too showed no abnormalities.

# Say What?

Speech therapy resolves persistent cough, scratchy throat

Dr. Shah then conducted a *videostroboscopy*, which uses a strobe light to examine the vocal cords. The videostroboscopy, which allows physicians to see the vocal cords in motion and detect abnormalities in them, revealed the cause of the problem.

“It was a strain,” Dr. Shah reports.

“The strain causes inflammation and irritation on the vocal cords, and that’s what was making Susan cough. It’s a problem that is more common than people think because it comes out of habit.

“If someone keeps clearing their throat, it irritates the larynx and actually makes things worse. That’s why we recommend that, instead of clearing your throat, you just take a sip of water or swallow.”

In Susan’s case, sipping water or swallowing would not resolve the problem. As

a result, she was advised to undergo six 30-minute speech therapy sessions. She found the prescription odd at first, but soon learned why it was recommended.

“They had me do some exercises that seemed rather silly at first, like holding up a card and blowing on it so that it vibrates and reading paragraphs and sentences and emphasizing certain letters in the words,” she says.

Susan says her scratchy throat and cough began to dissipate after just two sessions. She is speaking normally again. She says that might not be the case had she not found Dr. Shah.

“It’s unbelievable to me that I went to all these other doctors and never got any relief, and then I go to Atlantic Ear, Nose and Throat, and they do this simple thing, and I had relief almost immediately,” she raves.



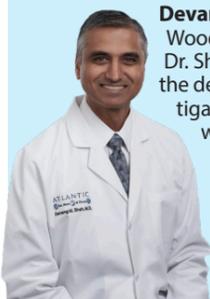
Susan Robertson

“Dr. Shah is a very practical doctor. He starts simply and builds up, and I appreciate that. That’s why I’ve already sent my daughter and two friends to Atlantic, Ear, Nose and Throat, because I highly recommend them.”

*FHCN article by Roy Cummings. Photo by Jordan Pysz. mkb*



DEVANG M. SHAH, MD  
DANIEL L. ROTHBAUM, MD



**Devang M. Shah, MD**, is board certified in otolaryngology. After receiving his medical degree with honors from Robert Wood Johnson Medical School, he completed his surgical internship and residency at Johns Hopkins Hospital in 1997. Dr. Shah is a member of the American Academy of Otolaryngology – Head & Neck Surgery and has served as chair of the department of surgery at Florida Hospital Fish Memorial, Orange City. He coauthored several journal articles investigating the relationship between microscopic inner-ear structures and hearing function and has presented his work at research conferences.



**Daniel L. Rothbaum, MD**, is board certified in otolaryngology and specializes in facial plastic surgery and otolaryngology. He’s a leader in balloon sinus dilation surgery in Central Florida. Dr. Rothbaum graduated magna cum laude from Harvard College in Cambridge, MA with a degree in social studies. He received his Medical Doctorate (MD) degree from Yale School of Medicine in New Haven, CT. Dr. Rothbaum completed his internship and residency training at the Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore.

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