



## Adult Otolaryngology

At Osborne Head and Neck Institute, we understand the debilitating effects that otolaryngology conditions can have on a patient's overall quality of life. From allergies, sinus infection and ear infections to hearing, sleeping and balance disorder, otolaryngology conditions can play a major role in the lives of patients.

Adult otolaryngology covers a wide range of conditions affecting the ears, nose, throat, head and neck. At OHNI, our doctors specialize in the diagnosis and treatment of the sensitive ear, nose and throat conditions that commonly affect adults. All of our physicians are board-certified otolaryngologists trained in the medical and surgical management and treatment of these conditions, as well as conditions affecting the head and neck.

Otolaryngology conditions may be chronic or acute, and usually affect one or more of our senses. Treatment for adult otolaryngology conditions depends on the individual condition, as well as the age, health and medical history of the patient, but may include long-term medication or surgery. Some of the otolaryngology conditions commonly treated at OHNI include:

### Allergies

Allergies are a common condition affecting more than one out of every five people, and involve an abnormal response of the immune system triggered by a typically harmless substance. The substance, such as pollen, mold or animal dander, causes the body to produce antibodies and release a variety of chemicals, including histamine, which causes symptoms such as sneezing, runny nose, watery eyes, itching or rashes.

Allergies can be seasonal or chronic, but usually come and go throughout a patient's life. While there is no cure for these symptoms, there are several treatments available to help minimize the frequency and severity of reactions.

### Sinusitis

Sinusitis is a common condition that involves an infection or inflammation of the sinuses, causing aches and pains, tenderness and swelling in several areas of the face. This condition can be chronic or acute, and may develop as a result of a cold, bacterial infection, allergies or for unknown reasons.

While acute sinusitis can often be treated with antibiotics and decongestants, more severe chronic cases may require surgery. Surgery for sinusitis aims to improve sinus drainage and reduce blockage of the nasal passages, which can be achieved by enlarging the opening of the sinuses, removing any polyps or correcting nasal deformities and obstructions. After surgery for sinusitis, most people experience a great relief in their symptoms and are able to enjoy a higher quality of life.

## **Head and Neck Cancer**

Head and neck cancers account for three to five percent of all cancers and affect over 50,000 Americans each year. These diseases can affect different areas of the head and neck, although most begin in the moist, mucosal areas such as the mouth, nose and throat. Head and neck cancers are most often caused by tobacco and alcohol use, but may also be a result of sun exposure, HPV and radiation exposure.

Fortunately, most patients with head and neck cancer experience symptoms right away that lead to an early diagnosis and more effective treatment. Symptoms of head and neck cancer may include hoarseness, growth in the mouth, blood in saliva or difficulty swallowing.

## **Hearing and Balance Disorders**

Balance disorders are complex conditions that cause feelings of unsteadiness, wooziness and sensations of spinning, moving or floating as a result of part of the inner ear, known as the labyrinth, interacting with other body systems such as the eyes, bones and joints. Problems within any of these systems can lead to balance disorders, which affect over two million people each year, causing symptoms such as dizziness, vertigo, lightheadedness, nausea and vomiting.

Some of the most common balance disorders include labyrinthitis; which is caused by an infection or inflammation of the inner ear, Meniere's disease; which is caused by an inner ear fluid imbalance, or Perilymph fistula; which involves an inner ear fluid leakage as a result of an injury or overexertion.

Hearing loss is most often caused by noise or age, and may cause ringing, hissing or buzzing in the ear, along with muffled hearing and not understanding what others are saying. Many patients with hearing loss are not even aware of their condition, but may be majorly suffering in their everyday life.