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Ear, Nose and Throat Specialists of Wisconsin Offers Nasal Surgery That Provides Patients with Relief

Retired Oshkosh Native Resumes Active Lifestyle Following Surgery

Oshkosh and Neenah, WI. (April 15, 2004) -- When someone meets Jerry Krueger for the first time, they are immediately impressed with his friendliness and outgoing personality. An Oshkosh native and the father of four, Jerry is well known in the community for his involvement in high school and youth sports, especially as a volunteer coach.

Even after surviving a heart attack in 1993 and treatment for sleep apnea, this 64 year old active retiree continues to keep a busy schedule. A few years ago, however, Jerry suddenly began experiencing cold-like symptoms that included sneezing, nasal congestion, nasal blockage and facial pressure. It became difficult to breathe, sleep and taste food, so Jerry made an appointment to see his family physician. The diagnosis was sinusitis and Jerry was prescribed antibiotics, as well as oral and topical decongestants to help alleviate the symptoms. When the antibiotics did not provide any relief, Jerry consulted with an allergist. Over the next several months, Jerry continued to feel miserable and frustrated finding no solution to his problem.

When allergies appeared not to be the cause of the problem, Jerry made an appointment with Dr. Robert Prehn of Ear, Nose and Throat Specialists of Wisconsin. "I felt horrible and had constant headaches so I didn't have the energy to do my daily activities. I couldn't taste the food I was eating and sleeping was extremely difficult because I was having so much trouble breathing," commented Jerry.

After his initial visit, Dr. Prehn diagnosed Jerry as having a severe case of chronic sinusitis caused by nasal polyps. Chronic sinusitis is an inflammation of the membrane lining of the sinuses which is characterized by numerous sinus infections

requiring antibiotics. Typically, only 10 or 15 percent of patients will have polyps, which can occur at any age.

Dr. Prehn recommended that Jerry have endoscopic sinus surgery to remove the polyps and restore proper sinus function. This procedure helps to enlarge the natural opening to the sinuses and restore normal function to the sinuses. The patient can expect to return to normal activities within four days with recovery usually taking about four weeks. Endoscopic nasal surgery is usually done on an out-patient basis depending on the overall health of the patient.

Prior to surgery, Jerry underwent several diagnostic tests including a CT scan of his sinuses, mucus culture and additional allergy testing. Dr. Prehn performed the procedure in the hospital under a general anesthesia. The endoscope is a special fiber optic instrument that provides the surgeon with a visual exam of the sinuses and sinus drainage areas. After the patient is anesthetized, a rigid or flexible endoscope is then placed in to view the structure of the nasal cavity. The procedure is used to reveal signs of obstruction, as well as for detecting nasal polyps that can not be seen through the routine exam. If polyps are found, they are immediately removed.

Dr. Prehn often uses the Stealth CT Guided Sinus System when performing complicated sinus surgeries. Presently, Theda Clark Medical Center is the only hospital north of Fond du Lac to have this equipment.

According to Dr. Prehn, "We explore all options before considering surgery and treat the whole patient in determining the cause of a problem. Surgery is not the answer for everyone, but when it is performed the results have been overwhelmingly favorable."

More than 37 million Americans suffer from at least one episode of acute sinusitis every year. Sinus problems cross all generations affecting both men and women equally. When surgery is recommended, it is usually preferred that the patient be 10 years of age or older. In Wisconsin, physicians generally see more sinus problems during the winter months due to a greater number of patients suffering from colds.

To reduce the symptoms of sinusitis, the physicians at Ear, Nose and Throat Specialists of Wisconsin recommend using saline nasal sprays that moisturize the nasal cavity, humidification of living spaces during the winter and over-the-counter decongestants and antihistamines. Seek medical help if these remedies do not provide any relief and you suffer from the following symptoms such as an upper respiratory infection lasting 10 or more days, facial pressure or pain, nasal discharge that is a yellow or green color, post nasal drip or a cough.

With five convenient office locations, the board certified physicians at Ear, Nose and Throat Specialists of Wisconsin have extensive experience in treating head and neck problems for the entire family. For a complete listing of services and office hours, visit their Web site at www.entwis.com. To schedule an appointment with one of the physicians, call 920-303-4130 or 1-800-435-4851.

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