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EVERYTHING YOU NEVER KNEW YOUR ENT COULD DO

Saint Luke's Lee's Summit Surgicenter is proud to partner with ENT Associates of Greater Kansas City.

What comes to mind when someone mentions an “ear, nose and throat” (ENT) specialist? If you’re like countless other Americans, you think of a kid with chronic infections receiving tubes in his ears, or maybe you’re a severe sinus sufferer who thinks of a sinuplasty. But generally speaking, few people understand the lengthy training required to be an ENT specialist and many may not realize the breadth of services these medical professionals provide.

With Pediatric ENT Month just around the corner, the specialists at Saint Luke's Surgicenter Lee's Summit and ENT Associates of Greater Kansas City want to shed some light on what exactly they can do for their patient population—both pediatric and adult.

Getting to Know Otorhinolaryngology

Formally, ENT is known as otorhinolaryngology and it incorporates eight subspecialties, including: head and neck oncologic surgery, facial reconstructive surgery, otology, neurotology, rhinology and sinus surgery, laryngology and voice disorders, pediatric otolaryngology and sleep medicine.

Basically, ENT specialists, like those at ENT Associates of Greater Kansas City, are able to address most of your troubles related to sinuses, allergies, hearing, the thyroid, balance, head and neck trauma or cancer, and even speech and voice restoration.

The Basics: Common Reasons to See an ENT

What you've heard is true: pediatric ear and throat problems are among more common reasons to visit an ENT specialist. A child who suffers recurrent ear infections is likely harboring fluid in their eustachian tubes which can become repeatedly infected—this is when a child may have tubes inserted to prevent further infection and restore normal hearing. The other common trouble is with tonsils and adenoids, which can be safely removed by an ENT specialist.

Childhood and adult allergies and sinuses are the next most common reason to see an ENT specialist. For these you can expect a tiered approach to allergy testing and a full complement of treatments and surgical procedures.



Testing for allergic responses, which may be done as a blood or skin test, is useful in determining appropriate treatment routes when symptomatic treatment proves inadequate. A skin test may be as simple as a skin prick, which introduces a small amount of a specific allergen into the top layer of skin, or it may be intradermal, which injects the same allergen deep into the dermis.

Chronic allergies lead to constant inflammation in the nasal passage and sinuses, and that usually results in a sinus infection. Sinus infections that do not respond to pharmaceutical approaches may require surgery, and for that options include endoscopic sinus surgery, balloon sinuplasty, septoplasty (to treat a deviated septum) and more.

Beyond the Basics: Head and Neck Treatment

Beyond middle ear troubles and problematic sinuses, ENT specialists are uniquely trained to deal with every aspect of the head and neck, excluding the eyes, brain and spine. This can mean reconstructive surgery following trauma; corrective ear surgery to restore hearing; or surgical removal of lymph nodes or cancerous lesions. And it all takes a unique approach when left in the hands of an ENT specialist.

Take thyroid surgery for example—this procedure treats thyroid nodules, cancer and hyperthyroidism by removing part or all of the thyroid gland. What's unique to the ENT approach is the focus on preserving both the nerves running through the neck and the neck's aesthetic appearance. It's also worth noting that your ENT specialist will almost never suggest surgery as a first or only option, knowing that some conditions may respond favorably to medicine.

The approach is similar for patients battling cancer of the head or neck. Traditional surgery is nothing short of life-saving, but when entrusted to an ENT specialist, there is greater focus on—and

training in—preserving the physical structure and aesthetic appearance of the area(s) being operated on. Generally, procedures to remove cancerous lesions are minimally-invasive and lead to not only a high cure rate, but also a renewed sense of self.

Rounding Out with Hearing, Balance & Botox

You probably never knew that your local ENT doctor would provide Botox injections, too. But sure enough, this is a common treatment for those suffering chronic migraines and, as you've learned, the head is ENT territory.

From there, the list of offerings only grows.

Audiology is commonly sought at ENT offices, where patients can receive hearing evaluations, hearing aids and minimally-invasive surgeries to restore hearing loss. Unlike audiologists (Au.D.), who generally provide only hearing aids and listening assistive devices, an ENT specialist can often diagnose the physical cause of hearing loss and restore it in part or in full.

In relation to the ears, vertigo and other balance disorders can also be diagnosed and treated at an ENT office, though surgical procedures are not typically involved. Among the more common balance disorders treated is benign positional vertigo, a condition common in the elderly. ENTs are able to evaluate this type of disorder and then treat it with medication and special balance exercises, including a physician-directed series of movements called the Epley maneuver.

Meet the Physicians at ENT Associates of Greater Kansas City

It's amazing what one specialist—or one group of specialists—can address. And the best-in-class physicians affiliated with ENT Associates of Greater Kansas City have more than 90 years of combined experience in their unique field of medicine, which encompasses all of the treatments discussed here and countless more. Their services, which are generally covered by insurance and don't require a referral, are available to all of the Kansas City metro and its surrounding regions.

Take another look back at the wide variety of services offered by your local otorhinolaryngologist, and consider whether this is the medical specialist to address your head, neck, speech, balance, ear, nose and throat troubles.

When is the last time you considered all the things your otorhinolaryngologist can do? They may be the answer to all your head, neck, speech, balance, ear, nose and throat troubles.

To learn more, call (816) 347-5800 or visit SaintLukesSurgicenter.org.



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