ADVANCED SINUS PROCEDURE HELPS OUR REGION’S WORKERS BREATHE BETTER

Insights By Dr. Bethany Cataldi
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Difficulty breathing is a common problem I see in patients, and “chronic rhinosinusitis”, or more commonly referred to as “chronic sinusitis” is frequently the cause. Chronic sinusitis is usually characterized by inflammation that remains in the nose and sinuses and does not go away over time. Infection, nasal polyps, allergies or irritants, and other factors may cause this inflammation of the nose and sinuses. Many of my patients are part of the regions’ workforce, and they suffer from chronic sinusitis due to the nature of their jobs. High levels of dust and other irritants at job sites can intensify their condition. Consequently, patients who suffer from chronic sinusitis will usually find that their breathing is impaired, and they may experience pressure, pain, and congestion in their nose and sinuses. They may also experience other problems as a result of their chronic sinusitis such as snoring, sleep apnea, mouth breathing, and headaches.

In the past, if they failed conservative treatments, patients suffering from serious recurrent or chronic sinusitis likely had to consider invasive surgery to adequately treat their sinus problems. However, with invasive sinus surgery, patients regularly have reasonable concerns about recovery time as well as post-operative pain and discomfort. Our region’s vital workers lead busy lives and often have varying work shifts so it isn’t ideal have to take time off work recovering from invasive sinus surgery.

AN ALTERNATIVE TO TRADITIONAL INVASIVE SINUS SURGERY

Advances in sinus surgery have led to the development of a virtually painless and minimally invasive sinus procedure called Balloon Sinuplasty. The procedure is an appropriate treatment for certain patients who have chronic sinusitis, breathing blockage, and positive findings on a CT scan. Balloon Sinuplasty can also be used as a supplemental procedure to traditional invasive sinus surgery and may be used in patients who have persistent sinus disease despite previous sinus surgery. The procedure has been extensively studied and shown to be safe and effective, and it can serve as a minimally invasive treatment option to traditional sinus surgery.

In a Balloon Sinuplasty procedure, the opening of the sinus drainage passageway is dilated and opened with a small inflatable “balloon” that allows for cartilage and tissue that may be obstructing the airway to be moved as needed, ultimately relieving the sinus obstruction without the need for cutting or removal of tissue that takes place with traditional invasive surgery. The balloon is then deflated and removed from the nose. The procedure takes far less time than other more invasive sinus surgery and can be performed in-office without general anesthesia in less than 60 minutes. In addition, there is NO nasal packing required. The majority of patients who undergo the procedure experience relief soon after the procedure, and with minimal downtime they may return to their normal activities within 24-48 hours.

COVERED BY INSURANCE PLANS

Positive patient results and overall satisfaction with the procedure have prompted improved health insurance coverage for Balloon Sinuplasty. Patients can now undergo an in-office procedure at a far lower cost with decreased risk of complications. Before Balloon Sinuplasty became a covered procedure, patients who couldn’t afford to pay out-of-pocket for Balloon Sinuplasty had no choice but to undergo invasive sinus surgery that would be covered by their health insurance. Now more-than-ever, Balloon Sinuplasty is a covered health benefit in the office, so patients suffering from chronic or acute sinusitis can be considered for a minimally invasive office procedure and avoid the possible side effects of general anesthesia.

PROCEDURE CAN BE PAINLESS

Not every patient’s sinus condition can be treated by Balloon Sinuplasty, and traditional sinus surgery remains a very important and relevant procedure for many people. However, it is important to understand that Balloon Sinuplasty has been established as an advanced and virtually pain-free option in the treatment of chronic sinusitis for patients.

In light of concerns about potential postoperative discomfort and down time with traditional sinus surgery, Balloon Sinuplasty can be an ideal procedure for many patients: Instead of undergoing an invasive procedure, a patient can undergo a Balloon Sinuplasty procedure where NO tissue is removed from a patient’s sinus cavity. Blocked sinus passages are gently dilated and opened to relieve sinus pressure and pain. There is no disruption to their anatomy, and the procedure can be virtually painless when compared to traditional sinus surgery helping patients breathe better.

Dr. Bethany Cataldi, D.O. is a surgeon specializing in treating disorders of the ears, nose & throat. She has once again been recognized this year by the readers of The Times as one of Northwest Indiana’s best Otolaryngology (Ear, Nose & Throat) surgeons and is the founder of Center For Otolaryngology & Facial Plastic Surgery, L.L.C. in Highland, Indiana.

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