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Procedure at Holy Redeemer helps sinusitis sufferers

(MEADOWBROOK, PA) – Sinus headaches, congestion, difficulty breathing. Depending on the season, most people fight the signs and symptoms of allergies, cold, and flu. But for Kevin McKenney, a volunteer firefighter from Southampton, his illness was continuous — for two straight years.

Says McKenney: “I was diagnosed with sleep apnea two years ago, so I assumed that this caused the prolonged congestion. However, the symptoms continued even after I received treatment for the condition. I constantly breathed through my mouth rather than my nose, and the symptoms were becoming an annoyance. So I decided to see an otolaryngologist. It turns out, I had sinusitis.”

There are two types of sinusitis—acute and chronic. Acute sinusitis is the inflammation of sinus membranes secondary to viral or bacterial causes. Symptoms last about seven to 14 days. Chronic sinusitis, McKenney’s condition, is inflammation of the sinus membranes caused by multiple factors: sinus blockage, repeated infections, abnormal drainage, allergic triggers, and nasal polyps. Symptoms last 12 weeks or longer.

Symptoms of sinusitis may include:

- Headaches
- Nasal congestion
- Facial pressure/pain
- Post nasal drip
- Ear fullness
- Thickened or discolored nasal secretions
- Dizziness

After trying steroid sprays and antibiotics to no avail, McKenney tossed the medications. Melissa Schwartz, D.O., from Holy Redeemer Hospital and Medical Center, suggested another solution—Balloon Sinuplasty procedure.

Says Dr. Schwartz: “The goals of this sinus procedure are to clear blocked sinuses, restoring normal sinus drainage and function and to preserve normal anatomy and mucosal tissue.”

Unlike conventional sinus surgery, which removes bone and tissue to enlarge the sinus opening, the Balloon Sinuplasty System is less invasive. Physicians place a small, flexible Sinus Balloon Catheter into the nose to reach the sinuses. The catheter is gradually inflated to gently restructure the blocked nasal passage, restoring normal sinus drainage and function.

Says Dr. Schwartz: “Unlike conventional surgery, which possibly leads to post-operative pain, scarring, and bleeding, there is very minimal bleeding after the Balloon Sinuplasty procedure. And many patients have been able to return to normal activities within 24 hours.”

McKenney returned to work that Monday. He says: “Once the splints were removed, I could actually breathe; my symptoms disappeared; and my sensation of smell returned. I went back to my job and daily activities without difficulty. I felt like a completely different person.”

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