

Surgeon Spotlight

ENTceps®

On a Mission to Reduce Pain

Over the past 36 years, John M. Hammerick, M.D., an otolaryngologist for the Christus Medical Group in Corpus Christi, Texas, has tried practically every new product in the marketplace for fusing and dividing soft tissue during tonsillectomy procedures. In his words, he started out “in the Dark Ages” using dissection and snare to remove tonsil tissue, and then progressed onto new technologies as they emerged, such as suction cautery and Coblation® but nothing significantly reduced the pain and suffering that his patients endured following the procedures.

“During the first week following a tonsillectomy, a patient typically experiences increasing pain levels before he or she begins to improve,” said Dr. Hammerick. “As a result, I would frequently get calls from parents who were concerned that their children were getting worse instead of better one week post-operatively. I was always looking for new ways to reduce pain and narcotic usage but nothing really worked.”

“Less pain, less narcotics, back to full diet sooner – those are tremendous benefits.”

Precision and Safety Equals Superior Outcomes

In the spring of 2011, Dr. Hammerick met with a representative from Microline Surgical who introduced him to Microline’s ENTceps®, a bayonet-style forceps designed specifically for procedures where fine precision, soft tissue sealing and dividing is required, such as tonsillectomy, parotidectomy, thyroidectomy and uvulopalatopharyngoplasty.

“I was skeptical because I had heard time and time again the claims from device reps that their products would provide superior outcomes but they didn’t deliver,” said Dr. Hammerick. “But I was very open to trying something new that would reduce post-op pain and get patients back to their full diets faster.”

Dr. Hammerick performed two tonsillectomy cases with ENTceps and was very impressed by the device’s precision and safety. Unlike conventional devices that use monopolar, bipolar or ultrasonic energy as modes of operation, ENTceps features Microline’s patented Thermal Fusion technology, which employs only direct heat and pressure to quickly and delicately fuse and divide soft tissue, minimizing collateral tissue damage.

“With cautery, it’s sort of like you’re nuking an area – throwing a bomb and figuring the fall out will hammer the big bleeders,” said Dr. Hammerick. “ENTceps is so much more precise. From a surgeon’s standpoint, what’s better than having a nice, clean and mostly bloodless dissection where you can really see your plane – it’s great. The benefits carry through to recovery where my anesthesiologist notes that patients are calmer post-operatively because they are experiencing less pain after ENTceps compared with other devices.”



John M. Hammerick, M.D.

Data Validates Improved Patient Experience

Dr. Hammerick was so impressed with ENTceps that he began gathering data to validate that the technology was improving patient outcomes. As of October 2011, he had performed nearly 50 cases with ENTceps and compiled patient outcomes data for nearly 35 of these cases. On average, patients 3-to-8-years-old are back on their full diets 3.5 days post-operatively and off pain medication by 3.7 day post-op, while patients 9-to-15-years-old are back on full diet and off pain medication by day four post-operatively.

“Like most physicians, I work on data,” said Dr. Hammerick. “From the minute I felt like ENTceps was making a significant difference I wanted validation. Recent literature has substantiated that Coblation doesn’t quite cut it, cold steel is the same thing and tissue welding is about the only thing out there that is doing it right. To date, I’ve been able to collect solid data that proves that out. Less pain, less narcotics, back to full diet sooner – those are tremendous benefits.”

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