

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

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THE DEPARTMENT OF OTOLARYNGOLOGY- HEAD & NECK SURGERY



PAUL A. LEVINE, M.D., FACS, chairman of the Department of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery, and rated among America's Top Doctors, stands in UVA's new 13,000-square-foot clinic that brings under one roof otolaryngology-head and neck surgery, facial cosmetic and reconstructive surgery, audiology and balance center outpatient services.



UVA's Otolaryngology Department combines state-of-the-art care with a patient-oriented faculty.

Can you give examples how UVA is advancing the field?

We have the third largest cochlear implant program on the East Coast and have the state's only speech-language verbal therapist whose specialty is teaching patients how to best use their cochlear implants—which is the real challenge of these devices.

We work with neuro-ophthalmologist Steven Newman, M.D., to spare the eye during resection of sinus cancer. We have shown that a portion of the eye can be resected without sacrificing good cancer surgical principles, providing significantly improved quality of life and excellent survival.

Our Vestibular and Balance Center provides comprehensive evaluation, diagnosis and treatment of dizziness, vertigo and imbalance using effective custom non-surgical, non-medical treatment options, state-of-the-art diagnostic equipment and procedures, and experienced staff specifically trained in dizziness and imbalance.

James Burns, M.D., recently joined our staff to head the Division of Laryngology. He brings a unique niche to our region — caring for professional voices. Laryngology deals primarily with voice disturbances that may require speech and voice therapy or surgery, and often both. If surgery is needed, Dr. Burns is an expert in the surgical correction of these problems. This division provides a full range of diagnostic and treatment services, including a state-of-the-art voice lab equipped with computerized voice analysis and video stroboscopic exams for larynx.

We offer the recently FDA-approved Steady State Response testing that is more frequency specific than other hearing tests. It allows audiologists to better design hearing aids or choose cochlear implants for young children and newborns.

What is new on the research front?

Our researchers are gaining worldwide attention for recognizing that inner hair cell loss may not be permanent. Now that we have shown that they can regenerate, our researchers are seeking to learn more about how, why and what can be done to stimulate their regrowth. The potential outcome of this work and its impact on the hearing-impaired population is mind-boggling.

Additionally, we have been selected to conduct high-level clinical trials of bilateral cochlear implants. George Hashisaki, M.D., will take a very select population and determine if the impact of having two cochlear implants is significantly better in oral and aural rehabilitation than having one implant.

The University of Virginia Ear Institute has recently been formed to provide an opportunity for our caregivers and researchers to sit down and hear one another's problems and collaborate to come up with the best options for patients.



UVA's otolaryngology subspecialties are now housed in one convenient, accessible location in a new building at 415 Ray C. Hunt Dr. in the Fontaine Research Park.

How do you ensure a seamless experience for the patient and referring physician?

Our new facility offers the most up-to-date computer technology, which assures rapid transmission of information back to a patient's primary care provider. Because many of our patients travel great distances, we make a point of coordinating their clinic visits and procedures to save them repeated trips. We also make sure they have accommodations at our guest houses that offer shuttle services to our clinics and a home-away-from-home environment. We go out of our way to provide patients with innovative treatment options, high-quality customer service, and, whenever possible, work with their referring physician to coordinate care close to home.

To refer a patient to UVA's Department of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery, call 800-552-3723.

The Department of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery combines state-of-the-art care and research with a patient-friendly and patient-oriented faculty and staff. What other qualities have made your department ranked by U.S. News & World Report for 14 years running as one of the nation's best ENT programs?

DR. PAUL A. LEVINE: Our department has a long history of excellence dating back 70 years and today brings to the field of otolaryngology a high level of sophistication and excellent clinical outcomes. We have led the way with new procedures and technology in the field. For example, Robert Jatsisoefer, M.D., rated among America's Top Doctors, created the basic principles on reconstruction of the malformed middle ear (often associated with the external ear for congenital reasons) and is recognized as the best in the world at this. Charles Gross, M.D., also rated among America's Top Doctors, is a widely recognized expert in endoscopic sinus surgery and has developed new techniques in draining frontal sinuses and repairing cerebrospinal fluid leaks through the nose using telescopes without having to do a craniotomy. Joseph Han, M.D., has been working closely with Dr. Gross and will carry on this work well into the future.

I'm proud to oversee a department that is made up of internationally recognized specialists and subspecialists and highly qualified speech pathologists and audiologists who together provide complete, seamless care. We can diagnose and treat all otolaryngologic problems, both big and small, in a timely and efficient manner through our several divisions — head and neck surgical oncology, facial plastic and reconstructive surgery, otology/neurotology, rhinology, and endoscopic sinus surgery, laryngology, pediatric otolaryngology, general otolaryngology, communicative disorders and vestibular and balance center.

I'm excited to share that in March we opened a new clinical facility that brings all of our subspecialties to one convenient Charlottesville location in the Fontaine Research Park. At this facility, we have the most state-of-the-art equipment so you can be sure the latest treatment options are available to your patient. This new facility speaks to UVA's commitment to keep our department one of the best in the country.