

Important Information for First Year Otolaryngology Residents

Welcome to our department! Up until this year, most of your professional experience has been in the field of General Surgery. While Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery has many things in common with General Surgery, it is also very different in some ways. The following comments are intended to help you make the transition easily, and to get off to a good start in your new career.

Just as in General Surgery, you will have many responsibilities, many of which will directly affect the health and welfare of your patients. It is important to remember that you are now engaged in training for your chosen lifelong profession, and you will be expected to carry out all of your duties in a way that reflects a serious commitment to excellence. This book outlines many of those duties, and you should read it carefully and refer to it often.

You should understand that a residency in Otolaryngology - Head and Neck Surgery will be at least as busy and demanding as your previous experience in General Surgery, and it will become even more demanding as you progress to higher levels of training. You should also realize from the beginning that your residency will not be a nine-to-five job. On many days, you will work hard in the clinics and operating rooms and still have to find time to read about your patients, to prepare for examinations, to attend numerous conferences, and to make medical presentations. Often this will mean devoting time in the evenings and on weekends. Remember, **your job is to learn**. While your residency will be demanding, you will find that if you apply yourself and work hard it will be extremely rewarding, both personally and professionally.

As you will recall from medical school, the head and neck region poses some uniquely complex problems by virtue of the complicated anatomy and the critical functions that reside there. While nobody expects you to be an expert in clinical Otolaryngology during your first year, you will indeed be expected to become an expert in the anatomy and to familiarize yourself right away with the basics of disease processes that affect the head and neck. You will therefore need to acquire a set of books and other learning aids that will assist you in becoming an excellent Otolaryngologist.

To that end, you should do the following *in the first two weeks of your residency*:

- Read this departmental book, cover to cover, and know it well.
- Review your head and neck anatomy carefully.
- Read the book **Otolaryngology** by DeWeese & Saunders in its entirety.

At some time during the first month of your residency, you should:

- Get a reference textbook (Bailey is suggested).
- Get a surgical atlas (Lore', Naumann, or others).
- Get a skull or high-quality cranial model, which is invaluable for learning the anatomy as well as planning surgical procedures. Skulls are available on temporary loan from the Anatomy Department (Dr. Swartz), but you should acquire one of your own as soon as possible.

- Ask your senior residents for guidance in selecting the best texts for you.

In our department, we have always taken great pride in our "esprit de corps", with all of our residents and staff working together toward the same goals -- educating young physicians to be the best Otolaryngologists they can be, and providing the very highest standard of care for our patients. With this in mind, we conduct our residency as a team, with all members contributing equally to help one another. There will be times when some services will be less busy than others, and it is fully expected that the residents will distribute the work loads evenly amongst themselves. Communication between residents at all of our hospitals is therefore extremely important, and cross-coverage will be expected whenever necessary. "Nobody goes home until the work is all done" is a good rule of thumb to ensure that everybody completes his or her responsibilities within a reasonable amount of time.

You will find that your fellow residents will be exceptionally helpful in providing direction and advice based on their experience. That will be supplemented by regular contact with faculty members and clinical staff members alike. If you have any questions, we encourage you to ask any of us at any time. We want your first year to be a great experience for you, and will do everything we can to guide you in your efforts.