



# News Release

American Academy of Otolaryngology—Head and Neck Surgery

*Working for the Best Ear, Nose, and Throat Care*

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## For Immediate Release:

August 5, 2008

## **Hearing Loss, Lack of Sleep Impair Back-to-School Health**

**Alexandria, Va.** - As the new school year approaches, many parents are preparing their children by buying school supplies, new clothes, and organizing fall sporting events. But in order to help kids get a healthy head start to the school year, the American Academy of Otolaryngology – Head and Neck Surgery (AAO-HNS) also recommends taking a closer look at your child’s health for common ear, nose, or throat-related health issues that might affect academic success.

“Ear, nose, and throat health problems are among the most common medical conditions that children face,” says Jay Youngerman, MD, chief of the Division of Otolaryngology at North Shore Hospital at Plainview in New York. “So in addition to the standard back-to-school physical, parents should also consider whether or not their child would also benefit from seeing an otolaryngologist for additional evaluation.”

Dr. Youngerman cites the following common ENT health concerns in the back-to-school season:

1. **Hearing Loss** – Hearing difficulty or loss can greatly impact children’s performance in school and their ability to interact with peers, and is increasingly a risk because of the popularity of mp3 players. Most children have their hearing evaluated after birth or in the first few years to determine any congenital conditions. However, as hearing loss is also caused by things like infections, trauma, and damaging noise levels, the problem may not emerge until later in childhood. Monitoring a child’s hearing ability on a consistent basis can help a parent take action early if an issue should arise.
2. **Pediatric Obstructive Sleep Apnea and other Childhood Sleep Disorders** – Obstructive sleep apnea, also known as sleep-disordered breathing (SDB) is not uncommon in children, but can have a profound impact on their educational experience by causing daytime sleepiness, aggravating attention deficit disorder, and other behavioral issues, along with bed-wetting and slowed growth. The number one indicator of SDB is restless sleep and labored breathing. This includes loud snoring that occurs every night, regardless of sleep position; snoring is then followed by a complete or partial obstruction of breathing, with gasping and snorting noises.
3. **Facial Sports Injuries** – Many children begin the fall with a variety of team and individual sports programs. These activities are great exercise for kids, but they can result in a variety of injuries to the face, including broken noses and facial abrasions. Many injuries are preventable by wearing the proper protective gear. Check with your child’s coach to make sure he/she has and is wearing all the necessary protective equipment. Also check with the coach after each practice to see if your child sustained any injuries while playing.

Dr. Youngerman says, “Other common issues like chronic allergies and sinusitis can also make a big impact on back-to-school success. Knowing the signs and symptoms will help a parent take quick action should an ENT health issue arise.”

For more information on children’s ear, nose, and throat health, including a detailed Q & A with Dr. Youngerman and a tip sheet for getting the most out of your child’s doctor’s appointment, or to find an ENT physician in your area, visit the AAO-HNS website at <http://www.entnet.org>.

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***About the AAO-HNS***

*The American Academy of Otolaryngology – Head and Neck Surgery ([www.entnet.org](http://www.entnet.org)), one of the oldest medical associations in the nation, represents more than 12,000 physicians and allied health professionals who specialize in the diagnosis and treatment of disorders of the ears, nose, throat, and related structures of the head and neck. The Academy serves its members by facilitating the advancement of the science and art of medicine related to otolaryngology and by representing the specialty in governmental and socioeconomic issues. The organization’s mission: “Working for the Best Ear, Nose, and Throat Care.”*

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