

## Better breathing after sinus surgery

Back in the late 1970s, **Irene Shemaria** was diagnosed with Samter's triad, a condition that includes aspirin sensitivity, bronchial asthma, and nasal polyps. "It's an annoying disease, more than a life-altering one," Irene says. "However, my case was complicated by a frontal sinus cyst, called a mucocele, that had worn away a dime-sized hole in my skull, exposing my brain to the sinus!"

Irene had surgery in 1986, 1991, and 1997 to remove polyps and to drain the mucocele. But, the polyps and cyst recurred, in part due to structural flaws in her sinuses that prevented proper drainage.

"In 1999, I took part in a study at Scripps Institute in La Jolla, Calif., to desensitize Samters' patients to aspirin," Irene recalls, "and I experienced a dramatic decrease in nasal congestion and sinusitis while taking aspirin daily. But later that year, after moving to Seattle, I learned the mucocele was back, again causing concerns about the hole near my brain."

Her otolaryngologists in Boston and Los Angeles recommended that she contact **Dr. Ernest A. Weymuller**, the Allison T. Wanamaker professor at UW and chairman of otolaryngology – head and neck surgery at UW Medical Center.

Last October, Irene saw Dr. Weymuller. "We agreed that surgery was in order to reconstruct the sinuses to prevent the cyst from coming back," Irene says.



Dr. Ernest A. Weymuller

On Feb. 9, Dr. Weymuller performed frontal, functional endoscopic sinus surgery (FESS), connecting the two frontal sinuses and removing the tissue between them.

"Irene's previous surgery had been incomplete and left diseased areas that caused recurrent obstruction,"



Irene Shemaria found relief with sinus surgery at UW Medical Center.

Dr. Weymuller says. "The post-operative scans demonstrate normalization of the sinuses and we are optimistic regarding long-term improvement."

"This is the first time in my life that I've been off of sinus medication," Irene says. "I feel a million times better.

Dr. Weymuller is exceptional in every way. The goal now is to not have surgery again."

**More information about UW Medical Center's Otolaryngology – Head & Neck Surgery Center is available on the Web at [www.uwmedicalcenter.org](http://www.uwmedicalcenter.org).**