

# Painless Tonsillectomy

## New Technology Reduces Pain of Second-Most-Common Childhood Surgery

### Success Story:



At 15, Jennifer Rizk had her tonsils removed almost “painlessly” by Marshall Medical Center otolaryngologist Dr. Alfred D. Trotter, with the help of a new medical device from Saratoga, Calif.-based Starion Instruments.

For more than a year, fifteen-year-old Jennifer Rizk had been suffering from *halitosis* (offensive breath). She did everything she could to resolve the problem, but nothing worked. Eventually, her family physician, John Crider, M.D., suspected the cause of Jennifer’s halitosis might be *tonsil stones*--small pockets appearing on the surface of tonsils caused by accumulation of bacteria that produce sulphur, leading to offensive breath. Dr. Crider referred her to Alfred D. Trotter, M.D., an otolaryngologist (Ear, Nose & Throat specialist) who practices at Marshall Medical Center (Guntersville, AL). Dr. Trotter confirmed that tonsil stones were indeed the culprit and recommended a tonsillectomy procedure.

“On the one hand, I was relieved to learn that my halitosis was not the result of poor hygiene, and that it could be resolved quickly,” recalls Jennifer. “But on the other hand, I was afraid because I had heard that a tonsillectomy was really going to be painful for quite some time after my surgery.”

Fortunately for Jennifer, Dr. Trotter performed her tonsillectomy using a new and novel medical device from Saratoga, Calif.-based Starion Instruments. This device uses patented technology, called *Thermal Welding™*, which enables surgeons to perform delicate surgery quickly and easily, without damaging nearby tissue, a critically important feature that makes possible a virtually bloodless procedure and consequently significantly less post-operative pain.

The new *Thermal Welding™* device was developed by Michael R. Treat, M.D., an associate professor of clinical surgery at the College of Physicians & Surgeons, Columbia University, which licensed the invention exclusively to Starion Instruments.

“I discovered this technology through a colleague of mine. As a physician, I am always looking for something to improve my results with tonsillectomies, because it can be a very painful procedure,” says Dr. Trotter, one of a handful of Alabama doctors who are presently trained to use the new Starion device. He expects the device to be used widely, however, in due course, as more and more physicians learn about Thermal Welding™.

“I was trained in the traditional manner to use what surgeons call a ‘cold steel’ approach to tonsillectomies: scalpel, scissors and different dissecting instruments. I then switched to laser, as it is less painful than cold steel. Dissection, of course--whether it’s done with a scalpel or even a laser--produces bleeding. Stopping the bleeding after surgery by means of cauterization is a significant cause of what leads to patients’ post-operative pain,” explains Dr. Trotter.

“I am very impressed with Starion’s new device, because it allows me to do basically bloodless surgery, which means there’s no cauterization necessary because there’s almost no blood to cauterize--which also makes the surgery faster to perform. As a result, I am seeing a rather dramatic reduction in post-operative pain in my patients compared to other techniques I have used, including laser, and faster recovery to eating normal food and performing normal activities,” adds Dr. Trotter. “With thermal welding, we haven’t had a single case of post-operative bleeding or readmission for dehydration or pain control. All of this benefits my patients considerably, which is the primary concern to me.”

Indeed, Jennifer Rizk experienced no bleeding whatsoever and was talking within hours of her surgery. She was eating within a day or two and felt “completely normal” within a week.

“I left the hospital the day after my surgery, and I was out with my friends just a few days after. I did have some pain, but it was very minimal, more like discomfort than pain, really. And it didn’t last long. Although I cannot compare this to having a tonsillectomy with the traditional method, I know that my surgery went well, and my problem is solved,” says Jennifer. “I am very glad that Dr. Trotter had this new device available to offer me.”



Alfred D. Trotter, M.D.  
Ear, Nose & Throat  
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**“This new technology makes surgery easier and faster with less post-op pain for my patients. That is what impresses me.”**

**DID YOU KNOW?**  
400,000  
children have their  
tonsils and/or adenoids  
removed each year,  
making this the  
second-most common  
surgery among children.

