

## Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons

### **Oral & Maxillofacial Surgeons provide intricate care for the craniofacial complex.**

Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons (OMSs) are surgically and medically trained dental specialists who treat conditions, defects, injuries, and esthetic aspects of the mouth, teeth, jaws, neck and face. OMSs perform millions of surgical procedures each year in their offices, hospitals, surgi-centers, and emergency departments.

◆ **Facial Trauma** - When a patient with fractures and/or lacerations of the mouth, face and jaws arrives at a hospital's emergency department, an oral and maxillofacial surgeon is likely to be the doctor called to treat the injuries. Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons routinely treat emergency patients with severe injuries from auto accidents, gunshot wounds and other trauma. OMSs also care for patients with broken jaws, noses and other facial injuries resulting from falls, sports, and other accidents. During surgical residency programs, OMSs complete Advanced Trauma Life Support certification. Currently, oral and maxillofacial surgeons are on active duty surgically repairing and treating craniofacial trauma incurred by our servicemen and women in Afghanistan, Iraq and other conflict areas.

◆ **Oral Cancer** - Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons have made important contributions to the advancement of oral cancer detection and treatment and reconstruction of affected tissue. Technological advances and multi-modal approaches to advanced disease have permitted less radical surgery, more predictable reconstruction, and improved quality of life for oral cancer patients. Oral and maxillofacial surgeons work collaboratively with colleagues in radiation and medical oncology, speech and language pathology, plastic and reconstructive surgery, and otolaryngology to provide high quality patient care.

◆ **Anesthesia Administration** - Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons receive extensive training in anesthesia and pain management that meets or exceeds the training of any other specialists except anesthesiologists. OMSs have administered anesthesia in the outpatient setting for nearly a century. Since 1981, most state dental boards require that anesthesia services are provided in a well-equipped facility with trained personnel, and follow standards based on the office anesthesia evaluation program developed by the American Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons (AAOMS). As a condition of membership in the AAOMS, OMS dental offices where sedation and anesthesia are provided must be evaluated every 5 years to ensure compliance with the standards, including current certification in Advanced Cardiac Life Support. The result of this public/private sector cooperation is an office anesthesia safety record exceeding that of hospitals.

◆ **Obstructive Sleep Apnea** – The Institute of Medicine (IOM) estimates the adult prevalence of obstructive sleep apnea (OSA) in the U.S. at 9% of women and 24% of men. The IOM reported that OSA plays a role in the development and adverse effects of systemic conditions including hypertension, coronary artery disease, congestive heart failure, stroke, and diabetes. Because of their training and expertise in the anatomy and management of facial skeletal, dental, and airway disorders, OMS play a unique role in the management of OSA. OMS perform mandibular maxillary advancement surgery, which obviates the need for CPAP or oral appliances, which are a significant drawback due to patient noncompliance.

◆ **Bite and Facial Correction** - Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons surgically adjust jaw and craniofacial bones to help patients with severe over- or under-bites, Temporomandibular Joint Disorders (TMJ), dentofacial and craniofacial deformities and diseases. Restoration of the jaw and facial structures promotes normal function and appearance enabling patients to: breathe and chew more comfortably; speak more clearly; and have improved self-esteem and psychological development. Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons are key members of craniofacial surgical care teams for patients with cleft lip and palate.

◆ **Dental and Craniofacial Implant Placement** - Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons successfully place more than half a million dental implants each year, providing patients a longer lasting, more comfortable and stronger alternative to dentures and dental crowns. For the edentulous patient, implants serve as strong anchors for traditional dentures and bridges. OMSs also place implants to anchor prosthetic ears, noses and eyebrows, and to repair damaged or malformed facial bones.

◆ **Surgical Removal of Wisdom Teeth** - Preliminary long-term study results show the Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons removal of wisdom teeth annually **saves thousands of patients from infection, pain and related complications.**

**Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons are highly qualified.**

Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery training consists of a four-year graduate degree in dentistry followed by the completion of a four-year (minimum) hospital-based surgical residency program plus additional fellowship training for many OMSs. During their surgical training, OMS residents are required to rotate to general surgery, medicine, anesthesia and several other surgical services of choice, including plastic surgery and pediatric surgery. In addition, OMS residents complete a structured physical diagnosis course. Qualified faculty must provide documentation supporting the resident's competence in physical diagnosis, including assessment of the patient's medical, surgical and anesthetic risks. Like medical residents, Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons complete accredited residency programs at prestigious teaching hospitals and institutions across the nation. There are 99 accredited OMS residency programs, and these include ten federal service programs plus eighty-nine programs located in thirty-two states as well as in Puerto Rico and Washington, DC.