



**TAKING
CARE OF
COCHLEAR
IMPLANTS**

**BLUE
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Deaf
Children
Australia.

Seeing a cochlear implant for the first time can be a bit intimidating. To help you get your head around them, here's some helpful information, including what cochlear implants are and how to look after them.

What is a cochlear implant?

A cochlear implant is a type of hearing device that mimics the body's own hearing system. Unlike hearing aids, which make sounds louder, cochlear implants do the work of damaged parts of the inner ear (cochlea) to provide sound signals to the brain.

Cochlear implants are most often used in children who have a profound hearing loss. They do not restore normal hearing or cure hearing loss.

Cochlear implants have two parts. One part is inserted surgically (implanted) into the child's ear. The second is a sound processor, which is usually worn like a hearing aid.

Deaf children get a cochlear implant to help them hear as well as possible to support development of their listening and speaking skills.

How do they work?

A cochlear implant converts sound waves into electrical signals the brain can interpret. Sound is captured by a microphone that sits behind the child's ear and sent to the sound processor. The sounds are then converted into a digital signal and sent to a transmitter coil, which is held in place over the implant by a magnet.

This signal is passed across the skin to the implant, which turns it into electrical impulses and sends these to the inner ear. This stimulates the hearing nerve to send a signal which the brain recognises as sound.

How to look after a cochlear implant

> A cochlear implant is a complex device that needs care and maintenance. If a child has a cochlear implant, they or their caregivers are responsible for looking after it, so you don't need to know all the details. But it can give you peace of mind to understand the basics.

> The external sound processor is not waterproof, so it needs to stay dry. If the child is doing water-based activities, they'll need to take it off or put it inside a waterproof cover.

> If the sound processor gets wet, it needs to be dried as soon as possible using a special drying unit. Ask the child's family about the type of drying unit they use.

> The sound processor also needs to stay clean. Be careful using hairspray or other products around the child's ears.

> If you have to clean the sound processor, make sure your hands are clean and dry. Clean it using a dry, non-abrasive cloth.

> The sound processor should be taken off during contact sports.

> If the child is doing an activity where they could lose the sound processor, they should use a safety line. This is a thin line that attaches to the sound processor with a clip that attaches to their clothing. Make sure the line is at the shortest possible length and positioned so it does not create a risk of strangulation.

> Children can wear a sweat band over their hearing aids or sound processor to help keep the device in place and prevent moisture from getting into it.

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The waterproof cover is just a bag in the shape of the cochlear. It surrounds the outside of the cochlear, which slides in nicely. It doesn't take up too much space on my head and it's really easy to use.”

NICK, DEAF SWIMMER



For further information about
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Deaf Children Australia uses the term 'deaf'
to refer to all degrees and types of hearing loss.
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