



Questions you May Want to Ask Your Child's Cochlear Implant Team



Name of Ear Nose Throat (ENT): _____

Phone/Contact Information: _____

Appointment Date: _____

Next Appointment Date: _____

WHO YOU MAY MEET:

ENT (otologist, neurotologist, or otolaryngologist) This is the surgeon who will be performing the cochlear implant surgery. He will thoroughly review your child's medical history to make sure they are generally healthy enough for surgery, as well as any bloodwork, MRI or CT scans, or other evaluations that look at the quality of your cochlea and auditory nerves. This allows the surgeon to predict, as much as possible before actually seeing your inner ear in person, how the surgery will go.

Radiologist A physician who specializes in imaging. He or she will take an MRI or CT scan of your child's head to look at the cochlea and the auditory nerves before surgery. The radiologist may give you the results of the study, or you may discuss them with your ENT

Audiologist A professional trained in the diagnosis and treatment of hearing. A CI candidacy work-up generally includes tests of your hearing level and how well your child is able to understand speech (in quiet and in noise). This helps to give a picture of the level of hearing loss, how you are functioning with your hearing aids, and how this affects your ability to hear, understand, and communicate clearly during your activities of daily living. After implantation, you will see the audiologist regularly for the mapping (programming) of your device.

Speech-Language Pathologist A professional certified in the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of disorders of speech, language, fluency, hearing, and cognition. For the purposes of a cochlear implant candidacy evaluation, the SLP will assess the patient's speech, language, and listening abilities. For CI candidates of any age, the SLP's assessment before surgery serves as a baseline. It helps the team develop a post-CI rehabilitation plan, and gives us a way to measure progress after you or your child receives the CI(s).

Questions about the MRI or CT Scan:

1. Is the anatomy of the cochlea normal? Does it have the standard number of turns?
2. Are the auditory nerves present and healthy?
3. Are there any other concerns that show up on the MRI or CT scan?
4. Based on the image, are there any special considerations? (For example, if the cochlea is of an abnormal shape, certain electrode arrays may be better than others, or if the auditory nerves are not present or too small on one side, it may be better to do the CI on the other ear.)

Questions about insurance coverage:

1. What is the family role in getting insurance to cover the surgery?
2. Will insurance cover the cost of the implant?
3. What documentation do I have to provide to my insurance company to get them to cover my cochlear implant(s)?
4. What will my out-of-pocket cost be?
5. If the insurance company denies my request, can you help me get supporting letters from the CI team to make an appeal?
6. If the insurance company denies my request, can you help me get supporting letters from the CI team to make an appeal?
7. Are there options for payment plans?

Questions about the surgeon/surgery:

1. How long has this surgeon been performing cochlear implant surgeries?
2. What percentage of the surgeon's patients are children?
3. Will the surgeon perform simultaneous bilateral implants?
4. What are the pros/cons for simultaneous?
5. How long will the surgery take?
6. What precautions should we take before surgery? Getting meningitis shots? What should we do about staying healthy before surgery? What kinds of health issues (cold, flu, etc.) would mean we should cancel surgery? What should you do if you/your child is sick before surgery?
7. What time should you arrive on surgery day?
8. What are some things to bring on surgery day?
9. How will parents or loved ones be kept up to date during surgery?
10. What happens when the surgery is finished? Where is the recovery room and what happens if you need to stay in the hospital overnight after the procedure?
11. What should you expect during the recovery period? Who should you contact if you have questions or concerns?
12. Is there anything about your/your child's particular anatomy that would make one CI brand preferable over another?
13. How much experience does the surgeon have implanting Brand X?

