

"In 1995 our baby was diagnosed as profoundly deaf and was the only deaf child in our entire town. We felt lost and alone in making our decision regarding a cochlear implant. After we discovered CI Circle, we had access to a whole community of parents."

-DB, parent of a child with bilateral CIs.



From Parents to Parents: Cochlear Implants for Kids

Do cochlear implants cost a lot of money?

Fortunately, cochlear implant surgery is covered by most public and private health insurance programs. There may be some annual out-of-pocket costs for batteries, cables, and other incidentals. Check with your implant center about what you may expect to pay.

We know exactly how you feel

The CI Circle is a community of over one thousand parents at various stages of the cochlear implant journey with our children. Some of us only recently learned that our child is deaf and are still researching our options. Others have teenagers who have had their CIs for many years. Some of our children were born deaf, and others became deaf from illness. Some of our children got cochlear implants as babies, while others got them in elementary school or later. Most of us do not have deaf relatives, but some of us do or are deaf ourselves. We are world-wide and we are happy to help.

It is free to join -- all you need is a Yahoo! ID. Just visit <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/cicircle/>

"Hearing loss may not be something we chose for our children, but it has brought us some very special friendships - CI Circle members are a part of my special friendships."

- Naomi Higgs Co-Creator of CI Circle

About CI Circle

CI Circle was established in 1998 by Karen Biernat of Bristol, Connecticut (USA) and Naomi Higgs of Adelaide, South Australia (AUS) for parents of children with cochlear implants or seeking information about cochlear implants. Over the years, many others have joined from around the world. List members now include adults who are deaf or hard-of-hearing, extended family members, and professionals. Anyone interested in pediatric cochlear implants is welcome to join. Group members agree to respect parents' choices regarding brands of cochlear implants, language methodologies, and educational placements.

About the Gift of Hearing Foundation

The Gift of Hearing Foundation is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization dedicated to increasing access to cochlear implant surgery and services for those who have been identified as candidates for this technology. The Foundation was established in 2004 by Eileen Jones, a late-deafened adult whose life was changed by a cochlear implant. For more information about the GOHF and about cochlear implants in general, visit our website at:

www.giftofhearingfoundation.org

This brochure is provided for informational purposes only and is not intended to constitute medical or similar advice. It is merely provided for information. CI professionals should be consulted with any specific medical questions.



With appropriate therapy and audiological care, children all over the world who have cochlear implants are:

- Happy, well-adjusted kids
- Thriving in mainstream school settings
- Participating in camp, sports, and other activities
- Talking on the phone with their friends
- Taking music lessons
- Learning foreign languages
- Hearing down to a whisper

Public Service Information provided by the parents at CI Circle in partnership with The Gift of Hearing Foundation.

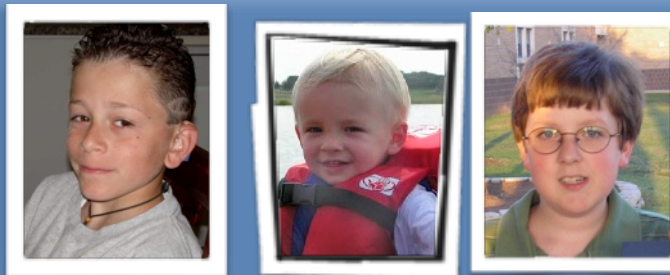
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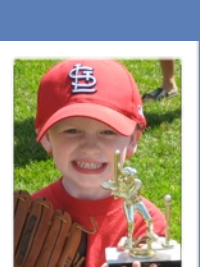
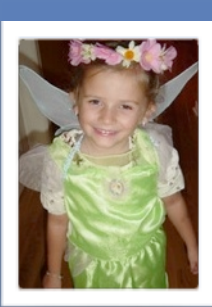
"Our son wore hearing aids for eight years before we finally gathered the courage to get him a cochlear implant. There is no comparison between the two options for his profound hearing loss. He can now hear well and attends a public middle school where he studies guitar and performs in local concerts."

-L&J DD, parents of Jordan, age 11



My cochlear implants help me hear. I love to listen to music, listen to DVDs, and talk to my friends on the phone. I can't imagine living without my CIs and not being able to hear.

-IH, 14 years old, CI recipient in 1995



"The most amazing thing I've witnessed is watching my deaf son help teach his hearing younger brothers how to talk. Now I love to listen to them converse, knowing that each conversation is a true miracle!"

-JQ, mom to Jason, age 8, who hears with bilateral CIs

What is a Cochlear Implant?

A cochlear implant (CI) is a biomedical device that allows deaf people with severe-profound sensorineural hearing loss to hear. It consists of a surgically-implanted internal portion and an external sound processor that resembles a hearing aid. Unlike a hearing aid, which merely makes sounds louder, the CI works by directly stimulating the hearing nerves in the inner ear through electrical impulses. The quality of sound from a CI is often clear enough that CI recipients do not have to rely on speechreading (lip-reading) in order to understand speech.

Will a Cochlear Implant Work for My Child?

Greater benefit from a cochlear implant is generally related to receiving one at a young age or having had significant previous hearing experience. However, even children who have not heard for some time may gain a great deal from their new world of sound.

The cochlear implant is not an instant fix. Success requires perseverance on the part of parents, who must make sure the processor is worn by the child, is working properly, and that they and their child receive training and therapy on how to develop listening skills, language and speech.

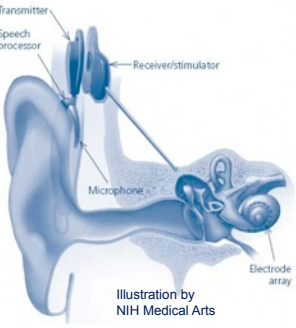
Children between 12 months and 4 years who get little or no benefit from appropriately fitted hearing aids and do not reach developmentally appropriate auditory mile-

stones are candidates for cochlear implants, as are children 4 and older with severe-profound hearing loss who score sufficiently poorly on difficult open-set word and sentence tests.*

**These are US FDA guidelines. Some surgeons may be willing to operate on babies younger than 12 months. Parents should allow time for candidacy determination and insurance pre-approval.*

Surgery: What to Expect

Cochlear implant surgery is ear, not brain, surgery and is performed by a specially-trained ear surgeon. The surgeon threads the electrode array portion of the device into the cochlea – the snail-shaped compartment of the inner ear where the sensory nerve resides – and places the receiver-stimulator portion in a small depression created for it in the bone under the scalp near the ear. The surgeon then stitches the skin over the internal device.



CI surgery requires general anesthesia and usually takes about 2 to 3 hours. Many surgeons like children to stay overnight in the hospital after surgery; others are comfortable sending the child home the same day as soon as he or she can eat and drink. Some surgeons prefer to shave a part of the head, while others shave very little. Most children recover quickly from surgery. Complications are uncommon, but parents should discuss the possibility with their child's surgeon.

After Surgery

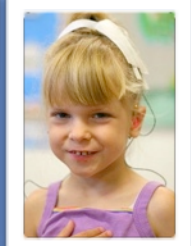
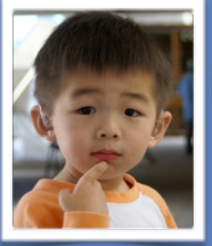
The child's hearing journey begins about a month after surgery. The outside part of the cochlear implant called a 'sound processor' is turned on for the first time by an audiologist specially trained to program cochlear implants. Children's reactions vary greatly. Some very young children don't seem to react at first, while others cry from surprise, and yet others are amused.

The implant program or "MAP" is gradually tuned after several more visits to the audiologist. It is essential that children are also enrolled in hearing rehabilitation therapy with a speech-language pathologist or auditory-verbal therapist experienced in working with children with cochlear implants. Parents should be involved in therapy to learn how to help their child.

Children will continue to visit their audiologist about twice a year for adjustments to their cochlear implant MAP. There is no need to replace the internal portion of the cochlear implant, even though a child's head will grow. Over the years, the child will be able to benefit from ever-improving technology as more sophisticated external sound processors are developed.

One or Two Ears?

More and more children are receiving cochlear implants in both ears, or *bilateral* CIs. Hearing with two ears helps when there is background noise and can also let one figure out where sounds are coming from. Both of these are important socially and educationally. Ask your cochlear implant center about bilateral cochlear implants.



"When my 5-year-old gets in trouble for whispering during class, I can't help but feel a little giddy, because there was a time when I thought she would never be able to hear again, much less whisper to her friends."

-RW, parent of a child deafened by meningitis now hearing with cochlear implants



"My son's constant smile assures me this was the best decision my husband and I could have made for our son. I feel truly blessed this technology exists."

-JL, mom to Cormac, 17 mo., bilateral CIs