

Suggested Questions for Cochlear Implant Teams

Perhaps your child has been identified as a potential candidate for a cochlear implant (CI) and you are just beginning the journey of investigating this option and what it means for your child. We recognize that this is a very big decision with many factors to consider. We have developed the following list of questions to assist parents in discussing this option with the medical team. Many of the questions here may be routinely addressed by the medical team or in print material that you are given to review. Some of these questions may not be relevant for your child, or you may have additional questions not included here.

This is not meant to be an exhaustive list, nor a one-time quiz, but rather suggestions for a steady dialogue and gathering of information as you move forward. We encourage you to seek a second opinion, as well as discuss your thoughts and concerns not only with your medical team, but with other families whose children have implants and with deaf adults who have direct experience with implants.

Questions for the Surgeon:

- Do you have a recommendation of device for my child? If so, why?
- What is the average time the child is in surgery for one implant? For two? Does this time include surgical prep?
- How many simultaneous bilateral implants on this age group have you successfully completed?
- Did you receive specific training (fellowship) in pediatric CI surgery?
- What is the size of the incision?
- Where will my child's magnet sit? How will you make them symmetrical, if bilateral?
- What is your shortest and longest surgery time you've had?
- How many revision surgeries have you done? Why?
- How many surgeries have you done on children under 2 years of age in total?
- How will you know if my child's CI is working after surgery?
- What is your experience with *preserving natural hearing* during surgery?
- What should I know about the difference between the training of an ENT and a neuro-otologist in relation to my child's surgery?

Questions for the Mapping Audiologist:

- What is your experience MAPping children my child's age? How many young children do you map on a regular basis?
- What can I expect in terms of MAPping appointments in the first year?
- How long is each MAP appointment and what usually transpires at each MAP session?
- If there are concerns with my child's responses, how quickly can he/she be seen?
- What are your expectations for auditory skills development (listening skills) in the next year for my child?
- How do you team with therapists and schools following implantation to maximize outcomes for children?
- What do you recommend for follow-up besides MAPping?

General Questions:

- Is there someone here who assists families with insurance problems and issues?
- Please share a bit about your team. Who are the team members? What are their roles?
- Can we talk with other families who have gone through the surgery?
- What coverage is available to us for loss/damage of external parts?

These questions were developed by a small team of professionals, parents, and CI recipients in Colorado, including Robin Getz, CO-Hear, Sara Kennedy, Colorado Hands & Voices Director and parent, Nan Thompson, AVT, Shannon Elam, Au.D, and Dinah Beams, EI Consultant and Colorado H&V Board member who organized the questions.

Also recommended is the Cochlear Implant Online comparison of equipment updated regularly at <https://cochlearimplanthelp.com/cochlear-implant-comparison-chart/>. Your local parent organization can suggest other resources. [Guide By Your Side Programs](#) have personal experiences and knowledge to share and forums for discussion, and can also connect you with Deaf/hard of hearing adults who have experience with cochlear implants.

For more information, see articles on coverage for loss/damage for external parts and past articles from parents on their experiences with cochlear implants at www.handsandvoices.org. Finally, each manufacturer offers consumers and parents for candidates and families to contact.