Is a Cochlear Implant Right for My Child?
Cochlear Implant Candidacy

Making the decision	The decision to get a cochlear implant for your child is a very important one. Take time to carefully consider the impact this will have on your child and the entire family. We will help you in this process by providing evaluations of your child and by giving you the chance to ask questions. We also need to make sure your child's hearing loss is the type that can benefit from a cochlear implant.

Steps to determine if your child is a candidate for a cochlear implant

The candidacy process	The cochlear implant team will work with you to determine if your child will benefit from an implant. Cochlear implant candidacy is based on a series of evaluations with audiology, aural habilitation, psychology, otolaryngology and radiology. Each of these evaluations are outlined on the next page. Some children may also need to see other specialists as part of the evaluation process. These evaluations are scheduled before surgery is decided.
	After all candidacy evaluations are completed, the team will summarize the findings. We will determine if your child meets the criteria for a cochlear implant. The final recommendation for your child may be one of the following:

1. Not to pursue cochlear implantation at this time.
2. To try a different type of hearing device.
3. To participate in therapy to see if your child has the necessary skills.
4. To move forward and schedule cochlear implant surgery.

Cochlear implant intake questionnaire and medical records	Before the cochlear implant candidacy process can begin, we must receive the following documents:

- Intake questionnaire
- Authorization to Release/Obtain/Exchange Patient Health Information for school and relevant medical centers
- Medical records (outside of Seattle Children's Hospital)
  - Audiograms
  - Otolaryngology records
  - Immunization records
  - CT and/or MRI imaging of the inner ears
- School records
- Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) or Individualized Education Plan (IEP)
- Academic reports (Speech/Language, 3-yr re-evaluations, PT/OT, etc.)
- Records from other therapies your child participates in

To Learn More

- Childhood Communication Center 206-987-3853
- Ask your child's healthcare provider
- seattlechildrens.org

Free Interpreter Services

- In the hospital, ask your nurse.
- From outside the hospital, call the toll-free Family Interpreting Line, 1-866-583-1527. Tell the interpreter the name or extension you need.

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Initial consult with an audiologist

After the Cochlear Implant (CI) questionnaire, authorization and records are received and reviewed by the CI team, we will call to schedule an initial consult. During the initial consult, an audiologist will discuss:

- What a cochlear implant is.
- How a cochlear implant works.
- The cochlear implant candidacy process.
- The requirements for successful use of a cochlear implant.
- Any questions you have about cochlear implants.

Hearing test with an audiologist

- Check your child's hearing in each ear with and without hearing aids.
- Start a trial with hearing aids if your child has not worn hearing aids or if a different hearing aid might provide more benefit.
- Compare your child's performance with their hearing aids to that of other children with cochlear implants to see if your child might benefit more from a cochlear implant.

CT/MRI imaging

CT and MRI are special types of imaging done to visualize the inner ears (cochleae) and auditory nerves. Your child may need to be sedated for the radiologist to perform these procedures.

Medical exam by a surgeon

- Assess the current health of your child.
- Review the CT and/or MRI imaging to determine if either or both of your child's inner ears are appropriate for a cochlear implant.
- Review immunization records.
- Discuss how cochlear implant surgery is done and the possible risks.

Auditory skills evaluation by an aural habilitation specialist

- Assess how your child uses both speech and hearing together in communication.
- Estimate your child's speech and language skills using their primary mode of communication.
- Identify specific language, learning or speech production disorders that could limit their ability to develop language and produce understandable speech.
- Assess their language skills and understanding of speech with hearing aids.
- Decide if your child would benefit from therapy to help maximize their auditory and communication skills before surgery.

Consultation with a psychologist

- Identify communication goals for your child with a cochlear implant.
- Discuss how your child currently communicates with family or other children.
- Assess your child's current social-emotional and cognitive status. If they are old enough, it is important that your child participates in the decision to get a cochlear implant.
- Discuss what supports your family and child have in the home, community, and school/early intervention program.

Other	Some children require additional evaluations. These might include an evaluation of your child's: • Balance function • Cognitive skills • Academic skills
Insurance pre-authorization	If a cochlear implant is recommended for your child after the candidacy process is completed, the surgeon will initiate the insurance pre-authorization process. Surgery will be scheduled after insurance pre-authorization.
Device consult	There are three manufacturers of cochlear implants approved for children in the United States. Our cochlear implant team works with all three. The surgeon may decide that one device is best for your child. If the surgeon does not have a preference you can select which cochlear implant system your child will receive. The purpose of the device consult is to review the three device manufacturers and answer any questions you may have. You can review the manufacturer information online: advancedbionics.com cochlear.com medel.com **Please be sure your child has their hearing aids and earmolds at every evaluation.**

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