

## Hearing & Amplification

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### Cochlear Implants

#### Pre-Implant Evaluations

As part of the cochlear implant process, a pre-implant evaluation is necessary to determine if a child is a candidate for a cochlear implant. The pre-implant evaluation process may include the following:

**Cochlear Implant Orientation:** The purpose of this is to orient a child and his or her family to the cochlear implant and the cochlear implantation process. Topics generally discussed with a family may include:

- What is a cochlear implant?
- The surgery and post-surgery process
- Follow-up and intervention schedules
- Cost of implantation
- Realistic expectations of cochlear implant benefits
- Warranties and insurance

**Audiological Evaluation:** As part of the pre-implant evaluation, an audiologist will measure the child's hearing levels. Testing will also be completed to see if amplification with high-powered hearing aids can provide enough auditory information.

**Medical Evaluation:** An ear surgeon determines if a child can safely undergo general anesthesia and reviews x-rays to ensure that the cochleas are suitable for insertion of the electrode array. The physician will also look for any other medical conditions that would prevent the use of an implant.

**Expectations Discussion:** The purpose for discussing expectations is to determine if a family has a good understanding of the benefits and limitations of a cochlear implant device. The following topics may be discussed with a child and/or family:

- What factors led to an interest in cochlear implants
  - ~ How have the child and family adjusted emotionally to the hearing loss?
  - ~ Are there socialization issues that are of concern?
  - ~ How is school performance (if appropriate)?
- What are the family's expectations for the child's performance with the cochlear implant?
  - ~ Are expectations realistic?
- Has the family talked with other implant users?
- How supportive are the immediate and extended family members to the idea of an implant?
- How committed will the family be to follow-up therapy?

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- What does the family know about the Deaf Culture's view regarding cochlear implants?
- What information is needed about assistive devices in addition to the cochlear implant?
- What information is needed about support groups and individual counseling?

**Vestibular Evaluation:** Vestibular testing may be requested to determine the health of a child's balance system.

**Psychosocial Evaluation:** A psychosocial assessment looks at other factors that can influence adjustment to or benefit from a cochlear implant. It addresses questions about reasonable expectations and ensures that a child and/or family are highly motivated and willing to participate in an extended rehabilitation program. In addition, this type of assessment can examine the potential candidate's cognitive abilities to rule out factors other than hearing loss, which may account for poor auditory and speech-language development.

**Cultural Viewpoint:** For more information on varying cultural views of cochlear implantation, please visit the following websites:

National Association of the Deaf - [www.nad.org](http://www.nad.org)

Laurent Clerc National Deaf Education Center - <http://clerccenter.gallaudet.edu>

Alexander Graham Bell Association - [www.agbell.org](http://www.agbell.org)