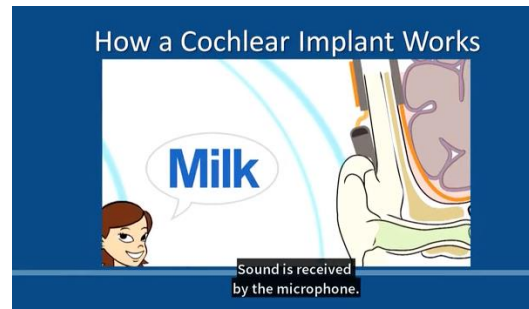


Module 5: Cochlear Implants: The Basics

Section: How a Cochlear Implant Works



Activity 5.1: Supporting Families in Understanding What a Cochlear Implant Is, What It Does, and How It Works

A. Review the following concepts discussed in this section of the module:

- the components of a cochlear implant
- considerations in choosing a cochlear implant manufacturer:
 - cosmetic differences
 - differences in features (e.g., battery life, water resistance, reliability, customer service)
- how the cochlear implant works:
 - use a model of the ear in addition to the video segments from the module
 - refer the family to specific resources from cochlear implant manufacturers that show how a cochlear implant works.

B. Guide families in connecting with other families who have recently gone through the process. If there aren't other families that you are aware of, the local school for the deaf, county program, or the local cochlear implant hospital center might be able to help a family make this connection. Speaking with other families may be helpful in decision making about getting a cochlear implant, expectations, and which manufacturer to choose.

- C. Work with the family to develop a list of possible questions about the various choices involved in deciding on a cochlear implant manufacturer and other questions to consider. Some families may be interested in seeking out available meetings/conferences where cochlear implant manufacturers share their products and may answer their questions.
- D. For more information to share with families about the process of obtaining a cochlear implant: [Cochlear Implants: Navigating a Forest of Information ... One Tree at a Time](#).
- E. Review some of the considerations related to what a cochlear implant can/can't do, such as:
- it provides awareness of many more sounds in comparison to a traditional hearing aid;
 - while it is a tool to enhance hearing, the child is still deaf;
 - it is only one part of a comprehensive plan for a child; and
 - while it may provide access to sound, a cochlear implant does not guarantee the child will have the ability to understand what he or she hears.
- F. Discuss additional considerations that may impact families:
- Ensure the family is aware of and able to participate in all that will be involved in traveling to the CI hospital center (e.g., the distance to the cochlear implant center where the child will be obtaining not only the surgery but numerous pre-surgical appointments, post-surgical appointments, audiological programming appointments, and possibly auditory and speech training appointments).
 - Visit the [FDA website](#) on cochlear implants for other factors to take into consideration.
- G. Consider the following for families of a child with identified disabilities:
- Is the child a candidate for a cochlear implant? Can he or she tolerate the anesthesia and the surgical process?
 - Is the implant a priority in relation to other possible medical/physical challenges?
 - How may a cochlear implant impact the child's quality of life?

- Will the cochlear implant further language and learning and improve quality of life or could it possibly make matters worse (e.g., incoming sound may cause confusion rather than support)?

H. Consider the following for families speaking a language other than English:

- Assist the family in obtaining supports to learn about cochlear implants in their primary language.

Developed with Stacy Abrams and Meq Osgood