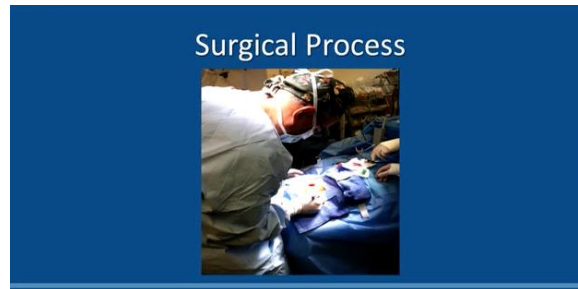


## Module 5: Cochlear Implants: The Basics

### Section: Surgical Process



### Activity 5.2: Guiding Families in Preparing Their Child for Cochlear Implant Surgery

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A. Review the following with the family:

- What to expect on the day of the surgery—Connect the family with other families who have gone through the process at the same hospital where the child will be obtaining his or her cochlear implant.
- Their thoughts and concerns about the surgery
- What they may already know about the surgery from their hospital cochlear implant center (including possible risks)
- Ideas about how to prepare their child for surgery (see below for possible activities based on a child's age and language abilities)

B. Develop a “surgery preparation” kit that can be used by you (as a service provider) or by family members. Tailor the kit to the age of the child. Include such items as dolls, stuffed animals, a lab coat, a hospital gown, a syringe, triangular bandages, a hospital mask, a toy stethoscope, an otoscope, a thermometer, a blood pressure cuff, a demo/toy cochlear implant, etc. See suggested activities and materials below:

- For preschool-aged children:
  - Add items related to cochlear implant surgery to the child's toy box. **Contact the child's cochlear implant manufacturer as the company may have stuffed toys with cochlear implants to add to the toy box.** Allow the child to explore items independently. Label items as a child plays (in a manner that is accessible to the child). Answer any questions your child asks about these new toys.

- Begin introducing books and pictures related to cochlear implants developed for young children. Read these stories to your child and leave these books with your child's other books to explore freely:
  - Check manufacturer websites for coloring books.
  - Check the library for children's books that include cochlear implants.
- Role play using items from the preparation kit. Have an extra set of materials for the child to parallel play with you. Have the child role play as the patient and/or doctor. Include siblings and other family members in the process. Take pictures of your play to share with the child at other times (e.g., pre-op appointments, day of surgery). Include such things as:
  - putting on a lab coat, mask, and gloves;
  - using items in a medical kit to act out taking temperature, taking blood pressure, and listening to the heart;
  - bandaging the head;
  - packing a bag with the child's favorite pajamas, toys, and books to bring to the hospital;
  - driving to the hospital; and
  - the process of getting to the hospital, changing into a hospital gown, getting medicine (sedative), sleeping, waking up with bandages on, removing the big bandage and replacing it with a small bandage, and going home.
- For older children:
  - Label and describe the use of the materials in the kit with the child.
  - Have the child role play/discuss use of the materials in the kit and the expected cochlear implant process (with you, siblings, classmates).
  - Introduce the child to other children who may have gone through cochlear implant surgery (and had a good experience!).

- When appropriate, address a child's feelings about getting a cochlear implant. Bring up possible concerns and fears that may be common about any surgery (e.g., parents will be there when the child wakes up). Provide language and guidance to facilitate the child being able to express his or her feelings in going through the cochlear implant process.
- C. Create a cochlear implant experience book that documents the child's cochlear implant experience:
- Share book with siblings, family members, and friends.
  - Bring the book along on the day of the surgery.
  - Add pictures following the surgery.
  - See the attached example, *Kate's CI Adventure*, an experience book made by the family of a 2-year-old child when she had cochlear implant surgery. This book is available through the [Center for Early Intervention on Deafness](#), and available online in American Sign Language, Cued Speech (American English), and Signing Exact English. [Click here](#) for the free, online materials.
- D. Based on the age and developmental level of the child, set up an appointment to tour the cochlear implant hospital, meet the staff who will be involved with the child's surgery, and interact with some of the experiences of the surgical day (e.g., look through an otoscope, squeeze the bulb on a blood pressure cuff). This should occur following the preparation activities described above. The child's audiological cochlear implant team may be helpful in getting this visit set up. Often this can be combined with the pre-op visit to the doctor that typically occurs prior to surgery.
- E. On the day of the surgery:
- Include the child in the packing process.
  - Include the doll/stuffed animal in role play in preparation to leave for the hospital and as you go through the preparation for surgery.
  - Based on the child's language level, describe what is happening and why it will happen (e.g. "Here's the medicine. The medicine will make you sleepy.").
  - Remind your child that you will be there when he or she wakes up.
  - Take pictures of your child going through the process to add to the experience book.

F. Post-surgery:

- Continue to provide opportunities to use the prep kit following surgery. Promote role playing and/or discussion to help process the surgical experience.
- Provide the child with paper and crayons for drawing. Some children are more comfortable expressing themselves through drawing than through words or play.

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*Developed with Kimberly Leong*