



South Tees Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust



North East Regional Cochlear Implant Programme

Adult Surgery

Patient Information

Planned Care Centre
Audiology Department

Following the assessment process, the cochlear implant team will meet to decide if you would benefit from a cochlear implant. You will be told about the decision and if we are going to offer an implant you will be given a date for surgery and an appointment to see the surgeon and sign the consent form.



Prior to the surgery you will have a pre-anaesthetic assessment appointment where the nurse will check if you are healthy and fit for surgery. During this appointment you will be given instructions about preparing for your hospital stay.



Surgery takes place at The James Cook University Hospital, Middlesbrough and the Freeman Hospital, Newcastle.

What happens on the day of surgery?

Usually you will be admitted to the ward on the morning of the surgery. Before the operation a number of people will ask you questions to check and double check all the information is correct. The surgeon, a nurse and the anaesthetist will visit you. It may be that your bed is not ready until after the operation.

The length of surgery is one and a half to three hours for a unilateral implant. However a longer surgical time does not necessarily mean there is something wrong – it is just taking longer. Usually for reasons nothing to do with surgery the length of time may run over.

Some of your hair must be shaved before the operation after you are asleep. During the operation a flap of skin is lifted and a small well is made in the bone behind the ear for the internal device. A small hole is made into the cochlea (hearing organ) to allow the electrodes to pass through. The surgeon will choose the most appropriate way of closing the skin at the time. Before you leave the theatre, the implant will be tested electrically.

What happens after the surgery?

When you return from theatre, you will usually have an intravenous drip in your hand and a pressure bandage on your head. The drip will be removed when the time is right. The pressure bandage stays in place overnight. Initially you will be sleepy but most patients are up and about within a couple of hours. You will be given antibiotics to prevent any infection. You may feel sick or be sick after the operation usually due to the anaesthetic.

When the pressure bandage is removed, the line of clips / stitches / steri-strips closing the wound are visible. They do not look pretty, but they do an excellent job of closing the skin to produce a neat scar in the long term.

Before discharge your implant will be x-rayed to check the position of the electrodes. Providing you are fit and well, you will usually be allowed home one or two days after surgery.

Steri-strips will usually come off after a few days. Stitches or clips can be removed in hospital or at your GP surgery and very occasionally you may need to return to theatre.

A date for initial stimulation of the implant will be arranged for about three weeks after the surgery.

Things to bring to hospital:

- Pyjamas and clothes with buttons down the front as it is difficult to pass clothes over the head after surgery.
- Money for your food and car-parking.

Comments, compliments, concerns or complaints

South Tees Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust is concerned about the quality of care you receive and strives to maintain high standards of health care.

However we do appreciate that there may be an occasion where you, or your family, feel dissatisfied with the standard of service you receive. Please do not hesitate to tell us about your concerns as this helps us to learn from your experience and to improve services for future patients.

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

This service aims to advise and support patients, families and carers and help sort out problems quickly on your behalf.

This service is available, and based, at The James Cook University Hospital but also covers the Friarage Hospital in Northallerton, our community hospitals and community health services. Please ask a member of staff for further information.

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