



**South Tees Hospitals**  
NHS Foundation Trust



# North East Regional Cochlear Implant Programme

Paediatric Surgery

Patient / Carer Information

Planned Care Centre  
Audiology Department

Following the assessment process the cochlear implant team will meet to decide if your child 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 your child is healthy and fit for surgery. During this appointment you will be given instructions about preparing your child for their hospital stay.



Surgery takes place at The James Cook University Hospital, Middlesbrough or The Great North Children's Hospital, Newcastle. One person is allowed to stay overnight on the ward with your child.

## What happens on the day of surgery?

Usually your child will be admitted to the ward on the morning of the surgery. It may be that their bed is not ready until after the operation. There is a family room to accommodate you if this is the case. Before the operation a number of people will ask you questions to check and double check all the information is correct.

The surgeon, the nurse and the anaesthetist will visit you. One parent may accompany the child to the operating theatre and stay whilst they are anaesthetised. The length of surgery is approximately between one and a half to three hours for an implant on one side and three to six hours for implants on both sides.

However a longer surgery 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. Part of your child's head must be shaved before the operation. 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 to allow the electrodes to pass through. The surgeon will choose the most appropriate way of closing the skin at the time for your child. Before your child leaves theatre, the implant will be tested electrically.

## What happens after the surgery?

When your child returns from theatre, they will usually have a drip in their hand or maybe their foot and a pressure bandage on their head. The drip will be removed when the time is right. The pressure bandage stays in place overnight. Initially your child will be sleepy but most children are up and about as usual within a couple of hours.

Your child will be given antibiotics to prevent any infection. Your child may be sick after the operation. During the operation some blood may pass from the ear to the mouth and the child may swallow it. This might appear later in the sick.

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

Before discharge your child's head will be x-rayed to check the position of the electrodes. Providing they are fit and well, your child will usually be allowed home one to two days after surgery.

Steri-strips will usually come off after a few days and skin glue peels off after a few weeks. Stitches or clips may need to be removed in hospital and occasionally a child may need to be returned to theatre.

A date for initial stimulation of the implant will be arranged approximately 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.
- Some of your child's favourite toys.
- Something for you to do during the long 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.

**North East Regional Cochlear Implant Programme**  
**Audiology Department**  
**Telephone / Fax: 01642 854068**  
**E-mail: [NECIP@tees.nhs.uk](mailto:NECIP@tees.nhs.uk)**

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**The James Cook University Hospital**  
**Marton Road, Middlesbrough, TS4 3BW. Switchboard: 01642 850850**  
Version 3, Issue Date: May 2017, Revision Date: May 2019