

Cochlear Implants

What is a cochlear implant?

- A different way of hearing
- Does not restore 'normal' hearing
- Instead of amplifying sound like a hearing aid, it sends electrical signals directly to the auditory nerve.
- It bypasses the damaged hair cells in the cochlea (that cannot be stimulated by conventional hearing aids) to provide a sensation of hearing.
- CYPs with Cochlear implants (CIs) have NO hearing without their CIs eg, if they are faulty or the batteries run out



Things to be aware of

- Avoid bumps to the head – perhaps wear a scrum cap for PE (be aware that instructions may be hard to hear)
- All contact sports should be avoided
- Avoid static electricity eg, in Science
- Some CYPs may have balance issues
- Some CYPs may struggle to find direction when swimming underwater – extra supervision may be required
- A small whiteboard may be helpful when using a scrum cap or during swimming lessons for instructions
- Many CYPs find Music lessons difficult to access as the CIs are finely tuned to the range of frequencies covering speech. High and low pitches and tone discrimination are very challenging
- Residential trips should include planning for when the CYP is not wearing their CIs – eg, in case of a fire alarm at night
- Involve parents in discussions about all safety issues and refer to safety guidelines

LIMITATIONS of CIs

- They cannot restore sounds to normal levels
- They do not produce sound as a person with normal hearing would hear
- CYPs have to learn to listen and process sound through the cochlear implant

Related links

www.berkshiresensoryconsortium.co.uk
www.ndcs.org.uk
www.advancedbionics.com
www.cochlear.com
www.medel.com/uk

Related sheets

Profound Hearing Loss