

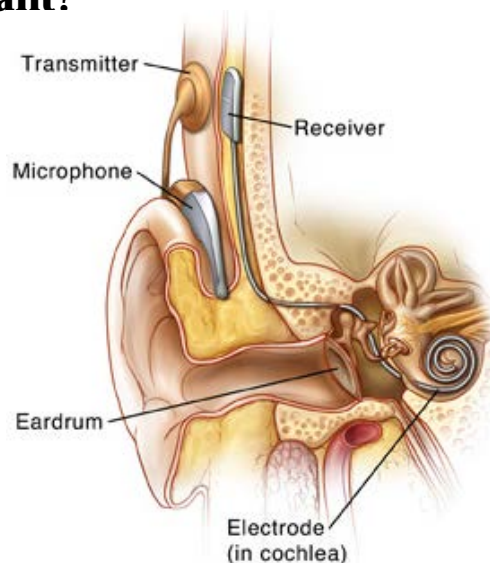
Cochlear Implant

What to expect

This handout explains what to expect and how to plan for your recovery after cochlear implant surgery.

What is a cochlear implant?

In this surgery, a small device is placed behind your ear and tiny wires are inserted into your inner ear. Cochlear implant surgery may be done when hearing aids have not worked well enough to improve your hearing.



A cochlear implant

Reminder

Unless your doctor tells you otherwise, do not take any aspirin or other products that affect blood clotting for 1 week before your surgery.

Hospital Stay

- Cochlear implant surgery takes from 2 to 3 hours.
- Some patients stay overnight in the hospital after this surgery. Your surgeon or care team will tell you what to expect.

What to Expect After Your Surgery

Ear Bandage

- Leave the pressure bandage in place for 48 hours after discharge. You may wear it longer if you wish.
- Some people like to wear a Glasscock Ear Dressing for comfort while they sleep.

Incision Care

- There will be some oozing from your incision site.
- You may remove the dressing 48 hours after your surgery.

- If your incision was closed with:
 - **Surgical glue:** Do **not** apply anything on the incision site.
 - **Stitches:** You may clean the incision site with distilled water and clean cotton swabs (Q-tips). After cleaning, apply ointment to the site. Ointment keeps the incision site moist. This stops scabs from forming and improves healing.

Bathing

- You may shower and wash your hair 48 hours after discharge.
- If water gets into your ear, gently dry it with a clean towel. Then use a hair dryer set on “low” to blow-dry your ear for 10 to 15 seconds, or until your ear begins to feel warm.

Pain Medicine

You will be given medicine for pain that you will take by mouth. Most people have very little discomfort after this surgery.

Eating

Most patients can begin to eat and drink in the evening after their surgery. For your first meal after surgery:

- Eat light foods that are easy to digest.
- Avoid greasy or spicy foods.

Precautions

- Do **not** use cotton swabs (Q-tips) in your ear canal.
- Do **not** have an MRI scan after surgery without talking with your surgeon about it first.



Do **NOT** blow your nose for 6 weeks after your surgery.

Activity

- Do **not** bend over or move quickly.
- Do **not** hold your breath when you exercise.
- Do **not** jog or do strenuous workouts for 1 week.
- Do **not** blow your nose for 6 weeks after surgery.
- Sneeze with your mouth wide open for 6 weeks after surgery.
- You may resume light daily activities 2 to 3 days after surgery.
- It is OK to do light stretching and go for a walk.
- You may resume all other activities 1 week after surgery.

Return to Work

You may return to light work when you feel strong enough and do not feel dizzy. Most patients return to work after their staples or stitches are removed at their follow-up visit, 7 to 10 days after surgery.

Follow-up Visits

You will need to make an appointment for your staples or stitches to be removed. This appointment should be 7 to 10 days after your surgery. Call 206.598.7519 if you do not already have your appointment set up.

When to Call

Call the clinic nurse or doctor on call if you have:

- Fever higher than 101.5°F (38.6°C)
- Severe ear pain that does not go away after you take your pain medicine
- Drainage from your ear
- Strong *vertigo* (the room is spinning)
- Bleeding that does not stop when you apply pressure
- Nausea or vomiting that will not stop
- Concerns that cannot wait until your follow-up visit

Notes and Questions

Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or health care provider if you have questions or concerns. UWMC clinic staffs are also available to help.

**UWMC Otolaryngology –
Otology and Audiology:
206.598.7519**

After hours and on weekends and holidays, call 206.598.4022 and press 5. You will be directed to the Community Care Line nurse.