

Immunizations and Cochlear Implants

Frequently Asked Questions

What kinds of shots (immunizations) should my child have before getting a cochlear implant?

- Children getting a cochlear implant should have a set of shots to protect them from bacteria called Streptococcus pneumonia. A shot called Prevnar is given to young children. Older children are given a shot called Pneumovax23.

When should my child get these shots?

- Your child must have this shot before he/she can be scheduled for cochlear implant surgery.
- Prevnar should be given at 2 months, 4 months, 6 months and 12 months of age. If your child did not get his/her Prevnar dose at the suggested age, check with your doctor.
- Pneumovax should be given after the age of 2 years.

What if my child has not had any of these shots?

- Contact your child's doctor or local health department to set up an appointment.
- If your child is between 2 years old and 4 years 11 months, he/she will need to get a series of shots.
- If your child is 5 years or older, he/she only needs to get one shot.

Why are these shots important?

- Children who have a cochlear implant have a higher chance to get a type of meningitis (infection around the brain). These shots help your child's body fight off the types of bacteria that can cause this infection.

Where can I go for more information about these shots?

- The Centers for Disease Control has information about immunizations (shots) for people who have Cochlear Implants. Their website is: <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd-vac/mening/cochlear/dis-cochlear-gen.htm>

Where can my child get these shots?

- Most pediatrician offices carry these shots. If your insurance does not cover well-child visits and shots, your local health department clinic can provide free shots for your child. Call the Cincinnati Department of Health at 513-352-2901 for clinic locations.

Be sure to include a copy of your child's Prevnar or Pneumovax vaccine when you return the Cochlear Implant packet to Cincinnati Children's Hospital.