

Music listening for adults

Listening to music with your cochlear implant can be a very different experience to what you might be used to through your hearing aids or normal hearing.

It is well known that the cochlear implant is limited in its ability to transmit certain aspects of the complex musical signal, however this does not mean you will not be able to enjoy music. Please see our tips below in the 'Start your own musical journey' section for helpful suggestions on how to get the most out of music with your cochlear implant.

Music listening for children

It has been reported in the scientific literature that children with cochlear implants can enjoy music quite naturally, as they have never heard the musical signals in any other way. We would encourage parents of young children with a cochlear implant(s) to involve your child in musical activities both at home and socially in pre-school music groups, if you are interested in increasing your child's interest in music and musical development.

Some early intervention programs run group music programs. Additionally there are community music and movement programs focused on young children such as Mini Maestros and Gymparoo that are fun opportunities for you and your child.

Start your own musical journey

Listen to familiar and unfamiliar music

For adults, the place to start is to listen to what you know. Play songs that are familiar to you, where you know the beat and the lyrics as this will help you. Cochlear implants do an excellent job of replicating the beat, use the rhythm as a kind of auditory guiderail to help you follow the music.

You may find that the type of music you enjoyed with normal hearing sounds is different or less enjoyable with your cochlear implant. We would encourage you to explore different genres of music and find what sounds appealing to you now.

Pick up an instrument

Learning an instrument is a great way for adults and children to get to enjoy musical sounds through their cochlear implant. Something like a piano or a guitar is a good choice as you can visualise the relationship between the notes and see if you can hear the differences.



Go to live music events

Going to live music events is another excellent auditory-visual way to enjoy music for adults and children with cochlear implants. Unlike recorded music, at live music events you can see the instruments and singers, their faces and the timing when people are playing/not playing. This is helpful for understanding the music and it's also fun and social.

The world of Apps

With more of us using smartphones and tablet devices, there are apps available on all of these to help cochlear implant users with music appreciation. If you like the idea of picking up an instrument but aren't quite ready, use apps to replicate using an instrument: Virtuoso, Tiny Piano, Guitar, GarageBand and Beatwave.

You can also use apps to help you tune in to the pitch and rhythm of different bird sounds with the BirdCalls app.

There are several radio apps which can provide free music of various genres such as Pandora and iTunes Radio.

Plug in

You can use the Personal Audio Cable from Cochlear to plug directly into the audio jack of your music device and into your sound processor. Contact Cochlear Customer Service on 1800 620 929 or visit the Cochlear Care Centre for more information.

YouTube

www.youtube.com is a handy resource for viewing music videos with lyrics. The lyrics should help you follow where the song is up to and help you enjoy the song.

Top tip: search 'Frank Sinatra lyrics' for a lot of Frank Sinatra songs – Frank has a very clear and deep voice, and is a great place to start.

Take-home messages for listening to music

1. Listen, listen, listen.
2. Music is another language and will take practice and patience.
3. Add an auditory-visual component to help, ie playing the instrument live or via an app, watching a live show, seeing the lyrics on screen with YouTube.
4. Don't be afraid to experiment with new styles of music.
5. It is never too early in your cochlear implant journey to start listening to music.

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