

# Implantable and Non-Implantable Hearing Devices



INDEPENDENT CARE HEALTH PLAN

Effective Date: 01/01/2024

Revision Date: Click or tap to enter a date.

Review Date: Click or tap to enter a date.

Policy Number: WI.PA-1132

Line of Business: Medicare

## Medicare Advantage Medical Coverage Policy

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#### Disclaimer

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## Related Medicare Advantage Medical/Pharmacy Coverage Policies

None

## Related Documents

Please refer to [CMS website](#) for the most current applicable CMS Online Manual System (IOMs)/National Coverage Determination (NCD)/ Local Coverage Determination (LCD)/Local Coverage Article (LCA)/ Transmittals.

Type	Title	ID Number	Jurisdiction Medicare Administrative Contractors (MACs)	Applicable States/Territories
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Internet-Only Manuals (IOMs)	Chapter 16 General Exclusions from Coverage; Section 100 Hearing Aids and Auditory Implants	<a href="#">Medicare Benefit Policy Manual</a>		
Internet-Only Manuals (IOMs)	Chapter 32 Billing Requirements for Special Services; Section 100 Billing Requirements for Expanded Coverage of Cochlear Implantation	<a href="#">Medicare Claims Processing Manual</a>		
NCD	Cochlear Implantation	<a href="#">50.3</a>		

## Description

Hearing aids are the most commonly known devices for assisting an individual with hearing loss. These are external devices worn either just inside the ear or looped over the ear and can be removed by the wearer. Other types of devices (implantable and semi-implantable) have been developed to treat varying types of hearing loss. Hearing loss is classified by the severity or [degree of hearing loss](#) and can be unilateral or bilateral.

There are three main types of hearing loss including:

- **Conductive** – Caused by disruptions in sound transmission from getting through the outer ear or middle ear to the cochlea, the hollow tube coiled in the shape of a snail’s shell, that changes sound into nerve messages and sends them to the brain.
- **Sensorineural hearing loss** – Caused by disruptions in sound transmission from the cochlea to the brain. This type of hearing loss occurs when there is an issue with the way the inner ear or hearing nerve works.
- **Mixed hearing loss** – Caused by a mix of both conductive and sensorineural hearing loss.

### Auditory Brainstem Implant

An auditory brainstem implant is a specialized implantable hearing device used in an individual who have had surgical removal of auditory nerve tumors and are totally deaf as a result. Similar to a cochlear implant, it consists of several components: a microphone, which picks up sound and transmits an electrical signal to the speech processor; the speech processor converts the signal to digital impulses, which are sent to a transmitter coil worn behind the ear and directly over the implant that is embedded in the skull.

The implant relays the signals to an electrode placed on the brainstem near the severed auditory nerve; the signals stimulate the brainstem and can be interpreted by the brain in a manner similar to the interpretation of signals normally received from the ear. After surgical placement, the implant must be

programmed and tested. The individual must undergo a period of training to recognize sounds and communicate with the device. Currently, the only US Food & Drug Administration (FDA) approved auditory brainstem implant is the Nucleus Profile Plus Auditory Brainstem Implant.

### **Bone Anchored/Bone Conduction Hearing Aids**

A **percutaneous bone anchored hearing aid** (pBAHA), also known as an osseointegrated mastoid implant, is a type of implantable hearing device based on bone conduction of sound. Certain individuals, typically those with conductive or mixed hearing loss, who are unable to utilize a conventional hearing aid may benefit from this device since it transmits sound directly through the skull. A titanium post is surgically embedded into the skull with a small section, called an abutment, exposed outside of the skin. A sound processor sits on the abutment and transmits sound vibrations via the titanium post. The vibrations to the skull and inner ear stimulate the nerve fibers of the inner ear, which enables hearing. Examples of bone anchored hearing aids include, but may not be limited to, Baha Connect System and Ponto Bone Anchored Hearing System, both of which have several different sound processor models.

A **transcutaneous bone anchored hearing aid** (tBAHA), also known as a partially implantable hearing aid, utilizes a magnetic abutment under the skin which is surgically implanted in an outpatient setting. These systems use the magnetic connection to join the sound processor and implant. This device creates an electromagnetic field that vibrates and stimulates the ossicles, sending signals to the cochlea to improve hearing acuity. Examples of transcutaneous bone anchored hearing aids include, but may not be limited to, Alpha 2 MPO ePlus, Baha Attract System, BONEBRIDGE and Osia System.

### **Cochlear Implant**

A cochlear implant is an electronic device that can provide improved speech and hearing communication abilities for an individual who has severe-to-profound, sensorineural hearing loss (SNHL) in both ears and who still has difficulty hearing despite appropriately fitting conventional hearing aids. The implant is surgically placed under the skin, behind the ear. It generally consists of four parts: a microphone, which picks up sound from the environment; a speech processor, which is worn externally or carried and arranges the sound transmitted by the microphone; a receiver/stimulator that receives signals from the speech processor and converts them into electrical impulses; and an electrode, which collects the impulses from the stimulator and sends them to the brain.

Although it cannot restore normal hearing, the cochlear implant enables an individual with profound or total deafness to hear sound, including speech, by stimulating the auditory nerve in the inner ear. Following implantation, the device must be programmed, calibrated and the individual trained to use it. The effectiveness of the implant depends heavily on postoperative rehabilitation that is necessary for the individual to learn to communicate using the device. Examples of cochlear implants include, but may not be limited to, HiRes Ultra/HiRes Ultra 3D Cochlear Implant, Neuro Cochlear Implant System, Nucleus Profile Plus Cochlear Implant System, and Synchrony 2 Cochlear Implant.

**Assistive listening devices** purportedly enhance the function of a cochlear implant or hearing aid by helping to separate desired sounds from background noise. These devices generally consist of a microphone to collect sound, a transmitter to send the signal across a distance, a receiver to intercept the signal and any one of several different listening attachments to send the sound from the receiver to the individual's ear, hearing aid or cochlear implant.

**Hybrid cochlear implants** purportedly provide both electric (cochlear implant portion) and acoustic (hearing aid portion) stimulation to individuals with severe-to-profound hearing loss that may still hear low frequency sounds. The hybrid implant electrodes are shorter and thinner than cochlear implant electrodes and are implanted only halfway in an effort to preserve the area responsible for low frequency sounds. An example of a hybrid cochlear implant includes, but may not be limited to, the Nucleus Hybrid Implant System.

### **Fully Implantable Middle Ear Hearing System**

**Fully implantable middle ear hearing systems**, in which all components are surgically positioned in the middle ear, are purported to be an alternative to the traditional over the ear hearing aid. The device uses the eardrum like a microphone and there is a sensor placed on the incus. The mechanical motion produced at the incus is then converted into an electrical signal and is sent to the processor which amplifies and filters that signal. Once converted to a vibratory signal it is then transmitted into the inner ear where it is perceived as sound. An example of a fully implantable hearing system includes, but may not be limited to, the Esteem Implant.

### **Non-Implantable Hearing Devices**

**Nonimplanted bone conduction devices** are intended for children and some adults to use prior to bone anchored hearing aid placement. These include bands or adhesive patches that can be worn over the mastoid bone which purportedly send sound waves through the bone and into the inner ear. Examples of these devices include, but may not be limited to, Baha Softband, Baha SoundArc, ADHEAR and Ponto Softband 5.

An **intraoral bone conduction hearing system** consists of two pieces; a processor worn behind the ear and a custom fitted, removable, oral retainer-like device that works as a receiver. The intraoral system purportedly functions similar to a bone conduction hearing aid and is indicated for adults with single sided deafness.

### **Semi-Implantable Middle Ear Hearing Aid**

A **semi-implantable middle ear hearing aid** involves a procedure where a magnetic implant coil is wrapped around the ossicles behind the eardrum via a small incision. Electromagnetic energy then vibrates the implant which directly stimulates the inner ear or cochlea. Examples of semi-implantable middle ear hearing aids include, but may not be limited to, Maxum Hearing Implant System or the Vibrant SOUNDBRIDGE System.

## **Coverage Determination**

*iCare follows the CMS requirements that only allows coverage and payment for services that are reasonable and necessary for the diagnosis and treatment of illness or injury or to improve the functioning of a malformed body member except as specifically allowed by Medicare.*

Please refer to the above CMS guidance for **cochlear implantation**.

*In interpreting or supplementing the criteria above and in order to determine medical necessity consistently, iCare may consider the following criteria:*

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*The use of the criteria in this Medicare Advantage Medical Coverage Policy provides clinical benefits highly likely to outweigh any clinical harms. Services that do not meet the criteria above are not medically necessary and thus do not provide a clinical benefit. Medically unnecessary services carry risks of adverse outcomes and may interfere with the pursuit of other treatments which have demonstrated efficacy.*

**Coverage Limitations**

[US Government Publishing Office. Electronic code of federal regulations: part 411 – 42 CFR § 411.15 - Particular services excluded from coverage](#)

**Coding Information**

Any codes listed on this policy are for informational purposes only. Do not rely on the accuracy and inclusion of specific codes. Inclusion of a code does not guarantee coverage and/or reimbursement for a service or procedure.

CPT® Code(s)	Description	Comments
69710	Implantation or replacement of electromagnetic bone conduction hearing device in temporal bone	
69711	Removal or repair of electromagnetic bone conduction hearing device in temporal bone	
69714	Implantation, osseointegrated implant, temporal bone, with percutaneous attachment to external speech processor/cochlear stimulator; without mastoidectomy	
69716	Implantation, osseointegrated implant, skull; with magnetic transcutaneous attachment to external speech processor	
69717	Replacement (including removal of existing device), osseointegrated implant, temporal bone, with percutaneous attachment to external speech processor/cochlear stimulator; without mastoidectomy	
69719	Revision or replacement (including removal of existing device), osseointegrated implant, skull; with magnetic transcutaneous attachment to external speech processor	
69726	Removal, osseointegrated implant, skull; with percutaneous attachment to external speech processor	
69727	Removal, osseointegrated implant, skull; with magnetic transcutaneous attachment to external speech processor	

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69728	Removal, entire osseointegrated implant, skull; with magnetic transcutaneous attachment to external speech processor, outside the mastoid and involving a bony defect greater than or equal to 100 sq mm surface area of bone deep to the outer cranial cortex	
69729	Implantation, osseointegrated implant, skull; with magnetic transcutaneous attachment to external speech processor, outside of the mastoid and resulting in removal of greater than or equal to 100 sq mm surface area of bone deep to the outer cranial cortex	
69730	Replacement (including removal of existing device), osseointegrated implant, skull; with magnetic transcutaneous attachment to external speech processor, outside the mastoid and involving a bony defect greater than or equal to 100 sq mm surface area of bone deep to the outer cranial cortex	
69799	Unlisted procedure, middle ear	
69930	Cochlear device implantation, with or without mastoidectomy	
69949	Unlisted procedure, inner ear	
92601	Diagnostic analysis of cochlear implant, patient younger than 7 years of age; with programming	
92602	Diagnostic analysis of cochlear implant, patient younger than 7 years of age; subsequent reprogramming	
92603	Diagnostic analysis of cochlear implant, age 7 years or older; with programming	
92604	Diagnostic analysis of cochlear implant, age 7 years or older; subsequent reprogramming	
92622	Diagnostic analysis, programming, and verification of an auditory osseointegrated sound processor, any type; first 60 minutes	
92623	Diagnostic analysis, programming, and verification of an auditory osseointegrated sound processor, any type; each additional 15 minutes (List separately in addition to code for primary procedure)	
92640	Diagnostic analysis with programming of auditory brainstem implant, per hour	
<b>CPT® Category III Code(s)</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Comments</b>
No code(s) identified		
<b>HCPCS Code(s)</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Comments</b>
L8614	Cochlear device, includes all internal and external components	
L8615	Headset/headpiece for use with cochlear implant device, replacement	

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L8616	Microphone for use with cochlear implant device, replacement	
L8617	Transmitting coil for use with cochlear implant device, replacement	
L8618	Transmitter cable for use with cochlear implant device or auditory osseointegrated device, replacement	
L8619	Cochlear implant, external speech processor and controller, integrated system, replacement	
L8621	Zinc air battery for use with cochlear implant device and auditory osseointegrated sound processors, replacement, each	
L8622	Alkaline battery for use with cochlear implant device, any size, replacement, each	
L8623	Lithium ion battery for use with cochlear implant device speech processor, other than ear level, replacement, each	
L8624	Lithium ion battery for use with cochlear implant or auditory osseointegrated device speech processor, ear level, replacement, each	
L8625	External recharging system for battery for use with cochlear implant or auditory osseointegrated device, replacement only, each	
L8627	Cochlear implant, external speech processor, component, replacement	
L8628	Cochlear implant, external controller component, replacement	
L8629	Transmitting coil and cable, integrated, for use with cochlear implant device, replacement	
L8690	Auditory osseointegrated device, includes all internal and external components	
L8691	Auditory osseointegrated device, external sound processor, excludes transducer/actuator, replacement only, each	
L8692	Auditory osseointegrated device, external sound processor, used without osseointegration, body worn, includes headband or other means of external attachment	
L8693	Auditory osseointegrated device abutment, any length, replacement only	
L8694	Auditory osseointegrated device, transducer/actuator, replacement only, each	
L8699	Prosthetic implant, not otherwise specified	
V5095	Semi-implantable middle ear hearing prosthesis	
V5267	Hearing aid or assistive listening device/supplies/accessories, not otherwise specified	
V5268	Assistive listening device, telephone amplifier, any type	
V5270	Assistive listening device, television amplifier, any type	

V5271	Assistive listening device, television caption decoder	
V5272	Assistive listening device, TDD	
V5273	Assistive listening device, for use with cochlear implant	
V5274	Assistive listening device, not otherwise specified	
V5281	Assistive listening device, personal FM/DM system, monaural (1 receiver, transmitter, microphone), any type	
V5282	Assistive listening device, personal FM/DM system, binaural (2 receivers, transmitter, microphone), any type	
V5283	Assistive listening device, personal FM/DM neck, loop induction receiver	
V5284	Assistive listening device, personal FM/DM, ear level receiver	
V5285	Assistive listening device, personal FM/DM, direct audio input receiver	
V5286	Assistive listening device, personal blue tooth FM/DM receiver	
V5287	Assistive listening device, personal FM/DM receiver, not otherwise specified	
V5288	Assistive listening device, personal FM/DM transmitter assistive listening device	
V5289	Assistive listening device, personal FM/DM adapter/boot coupling device for receiver, any type	
V5290	Assistive listening device, transmitter microphone, any type	

## References

- Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS). Medicare Claims Processing Manual. Billing requirements for special services. Updated June 29, 2023. Accessed November 7, 2023.
- Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS). National Coverage Determination (NCD). Cochlear implantation (50.3). <https://www.cms.gov>. Published September 26, 2022. Accessed October 31, 2023.



## Appendix

### Appendix A – Degree of Hearing Loss

Degree of Hearing Loss	Hearing Loss Range (dB HL = decibels hearing level)
Normal Hearing	-10 to 15 dB HL
Slight	16 to 25 dB HL
Mild	26 to 40 dB HL
Moderate	41 to 55 dB HL
Moderately Severe	56 to 70 dB HL
Severe	71 to 90 dB HL
Profound	91 dB HL or greater

### Appendix B – Hearing Tests

**Early Speech Perception Test (ESP)** – Pattern perception, two syllable word (with equal emphasis on both syllables) identification and monosyllable identification are assessed with a response format of pictured vocabulary or toy manipulatives.

**Hearing In Noise Test (HINT)** – Individual uses binaural hearing to repeat sentences in both quiet and with various levels of competing noise being scored on the accuracy of their responses; version available for children as well.

**Infant-Toddler Meaningful Auditory Integration Scale (IT-MAIS)** – Modification of the MAIS (see below) that is a structured interview designed to assess an infant or toddler’s spontaneous responses to sound in his/her everyday environment; based on information provided by the child’s parents.

**Lexical Neighborhood Test (LNT)** – Open-set test of word understanding which includes vocabulary familiar to children ages three to five; this version uses single syllable words.

**Meaningful Auditory Integration Scale (MAIS)** – Evaluates use of sound in everyday situations by profoundly hearing-impaired children in regards to three main areas of vocalization behavior, alerting to sounds and deriving meaning from sound; information about the use of sound in everyday situations is obtained with a parent interview.

**Multisyllabic Lexical Neighborhood Test (MLNT)** – Open-set test of word understanding which includes vocabulary familiar to children ages three to five; this version uses two and three syllable words.

**Phonetically Balanced-Kindergarten Word Test (PBK)** – Consists of four 50-word lists composed of kindergarten vocabulary presented in an open-set format; the tester presents the words verbally and the child is asked to repeat the word; scored on accuracy.

## Change Summary

- 01/01/2024 New Policy.

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