

Cochlear Implant Services





**We’re glad
you’ve found us!**

Wherever you are in Australia—
and wherever you are in your journey
—we’re here for you.

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Redefining what's possible

NextSense is a not-for-profit organisation supporting people who are deaf, hard of hearing, blind or have low vision across Australia for over 160 years.

We work with children, adults and their families to educate and create an individual program of care that meets their unique needs. We're a registered NDIS provider, and we work with you and your family to help your child achieve their goals and potential.

With the support of generous donations, NextSense provides vital support for children and adults, more cochlear implants than any other service in Australia, and is a world leader for research, technology and professional education in our field.

Each year:

400+

people receive cochlear implants through NextSense

6,000+

people receive ongoing care and support through NextSense

Support wherever you need it

NextSense has a network of centres across Australia, in cities and regional areas in NSW, ACT, VIC, QLD and NT. For those who can't access a centre, NextSense Connected Services can provide access to in-home therapy services via high-quality video conferencing.



Australia's largest and most comprehensive program

NextSense delivers Australia's largest and most comprehensive cochlear implant program, giving you access to leading surgeons, expert health professionals, and the latest technologies, with a range of funding options to support you on your journey.

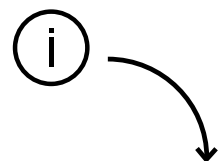
From exploring your options in your first consultation through to surgery and ongoing holistic care—you'll have an expert team in your corner, ensuring you can achieve the best possible outcomes.



Services in your chosen language

We understand that the best language to receive support in is the one you use at home. All NextSense clients can access a high-quality translation service, so you can access the information you need in your chosen language.

What's a cochlear implant?



A cochlear implant is a hearing device that stimulates the hearing nerve, known as the cochlea or auditory nerve, to provide access to high-quality, more detailed sound.

Unlike hearing aids, which amplify sound, cochlear implants provide direct access to the cochlear, often making it easier to:

- understand speech and interact with others
- hear in loud environments
- locate where sound is coming from
- connect with the world around you.

For children, cochlear implants provide the opportunity to achieve the best possible speech and language outcomes—enhancing access to learning, play and social interaction.



Sometimes, hearing aids aren't enough

With some types of hearing loss, sounds can be muffled or garbled. This type of hearing loss can make it difficult to interpret the meaning of speech and sounds. In this situation, a cochlear implant may work better than hearing aids.



Designed to last a lifetime

Cochlear implants are designed to last a lifetime. As technology evolves, the external component of the implant, the sound processor, can be upgraded without the need for further surgery.



Suitable for all ages

Our youngest cochlear implant recipient was three-months-old and the oldest was in their nineties. When it comes to improving your hearing, age isn't a barrier.



Access to funding options

There are public, government and private funding options for surgery and supporting audiology and care services. Our NextSense team will help you explore the funding available. Eligible clients can access therapy and allied health services through their NDIS plan.

How does a cochlear implant work?

A cochlear implant bypasses the damaged parts of the inner ear by electrically stimulating the hearing nerve. The nerve then sends a signal to the brain where it is interpreted as sound.



A cochlear implant has both internal and external parts.

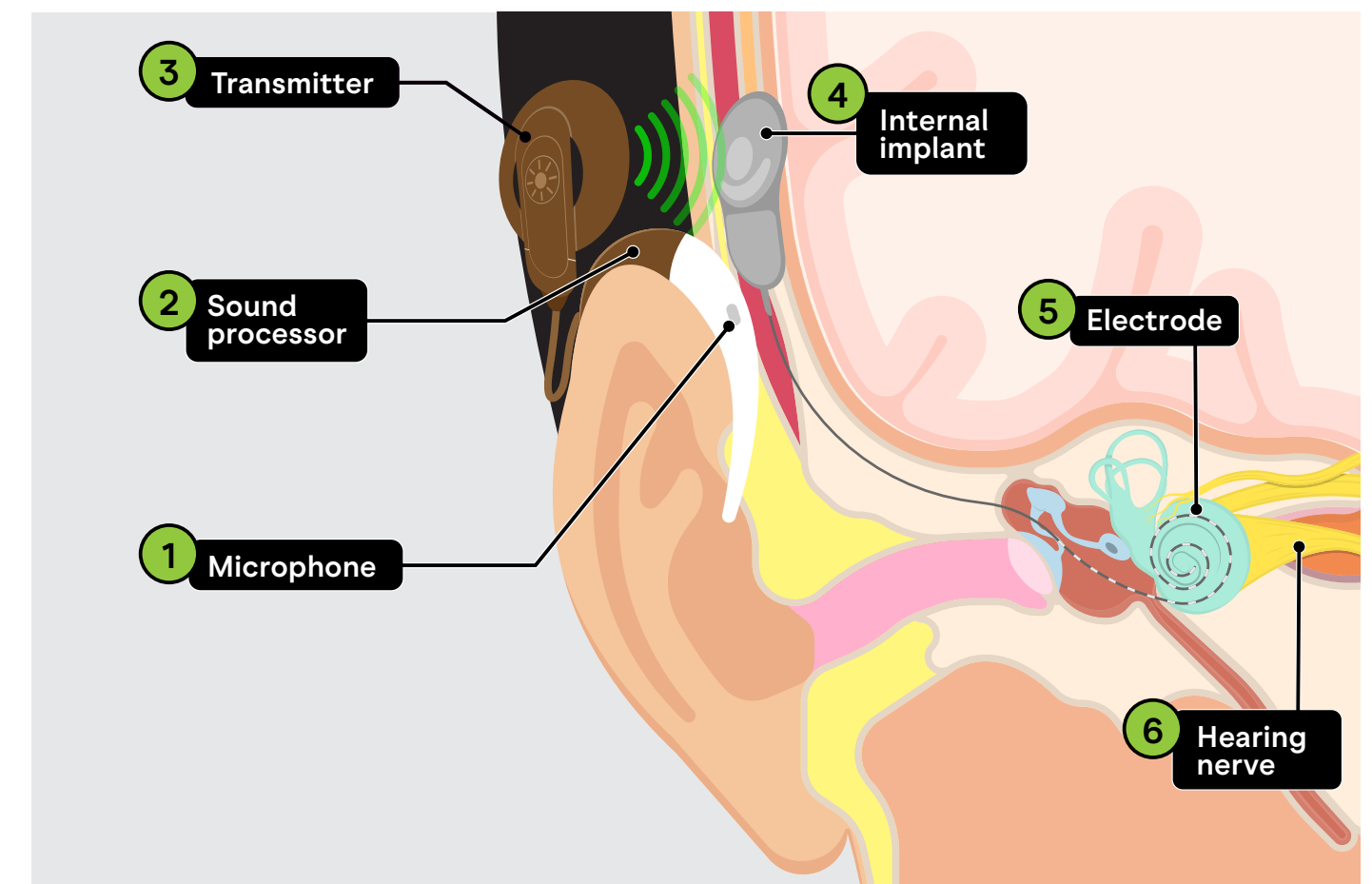
The internal parts are implanted via a surgical procedure.

- The receiver and magnet are placed under the skin behind the ear.
- The electrode array (a series of electrodes) is placed in the cochlea.

The external parts are worn on the outside of the ear and can be put on and removed by the recipient, or by a parent or caregiver. The external parts of a cochlear implant can be upgraded as technology advances without additional surgery. They are:

- The sound processor, which is powered by batteries and looks similar to a hearing aid.
- The cable and circular coil connected to the sound processor, that's usually held on the head by a magnet. There are also off-the-ear options that may suit some people.

Cochlear implants provide direct access to sound



- 1** Sound is received by the microphone of the sound processor.
- 2** The sound is processed into digital signals.
- 3** The digital signals are sent to the transmitter coil
- 4** The transmitter coil sends the digital signals across the skin where it's converted into electrical signals by the internal device.
- 5** Electrical signals are sent to the electrode array to stimulate the hearing nerve fibres in the inner ear (cochlea).
- 6** Signals are then sent, via the hearing nerve to the brain, and recognised as sound.

Who are cochlear implants for?

When hearing aids are not enough, a cochlear implant may be the best solution for people of any age.

Cochlear implants are suited to people with moderate to profound hearing loss in one or both ears, and can benefit newborns right up to people aged in their nineties.

The technology is specifically designed for people with sensorineural hearing loss, meaning the loss is caused by damage to the inner ear. This can be the result of the ageing process, illness, or unknown causes—and can occur at any age.

For people with conductive hearing loss, there's another solution—bone conduction implants—a form of implantable hearing technology that transmits the vibrations through the skull to the cochlear of the inner ear.

Conductive hearing loss is generally caused by damage to the other parts of the ear as a result of an obstruction, fluid or ear formation.

NextSense provides access to the technology, support and ongoing care for both cochlear and bone conduction implant recipients.

Fast Facts



Cochlear implants have been in use for more than 40 years.



There are over 500,000 cochlear implant recipients worldwide.



Age isn't a barrier—our youngest recipient was three months, and the oldest in their nineties.



✦
✦ **We're here to help you explore your options** ✦

Your personal circumstances, including the type and degree of your hearing loss, your general health, and your desired outcomes are all factors that determine your best solution.

That's where we help—and can determine whether a cochlear implant or bone conduction implant is right for you, or your child.

But there's more. The NextSense team of health professionals will provide you with the information, advice and support you need to make the best decision for yourself or your child.

Is a cochlear implant right for me?

The first stage of your journey is about understanding your needs. This stage may include a range of audiological and medical tests to determine whether a cochlear implant is a suitable option for you or your child.

These tests can include:

Pure Tone Audiometry (PTA) which involves the playing of a series of beeps (or pure tones) and measuring how you or your child responds.

Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI), which is used to determine the presence and size of the auditory nerve, and is performed in a hospital. For infants and young children, or those with additional disabilities, this may be performed under mild sedation.

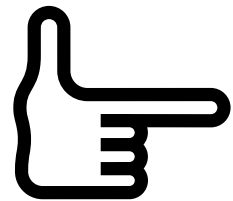
Electrocochleography (EcochG Test) may be used to measure your hearing, particular in situations where behavioural or functional testing can't be used, or has proved inconclusive. It may also be used when an MRI identifies a potential abnormality in the nerve.



Infant and young children may also require objective and functional assessments to understand how their hearing is functioning and how they respond to sound. These are safe and non-invasive tests, performed by an audiologist, speech pathologist or teacher of the deaf through age-appropriate activities and play.

Your journey with NextSense

We are with you every step of the way, from the first consultation to a lifetime of care and support.



①

Assessment— understanding whether a cochlear implant could help you

This stage includes assessments with expert health professionals such as audiologists and speech pathologists, to understand your hearing loss and listening and communication needs. This helps to determine if an implant is a suitable option for you.

②

Consultation— exploring your options

Once it's determined that a cochlear implant is an option, you'll meet with experts to answer your questions and equip you with the information you need to make the best decision. This can include consultations with NextSense specialists, Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT) surgeons, meeting cochlear implant recipients, and attending information sessions.

③

Surgery— undergoing your cochlear implantation procedure

Once you've made the decision to proceed, we'll help you organise and prepare for your cochlear implantation procedure, performed at a public or private hospital by a NextSense ENT surgeon. Most people are able to go home the day after their surgery.

④

Switch-on— switching your implant on

Your implant will be switched on by your NextSense audiologist, as soon as possible after surgery. While most people can hear some sound immediately, it can take time to interpret these sounds. We'll be with you every step of the way to provide the care you need to achieve the best possible outcomes.

⑤

Ongoing care— increasing your access to sound

Once your implant is switched on, we'll continue to support you to meet your goals. This can include tuning your cochlear implant to your needs (mapping), helping you practice listening and communication, and communication therapy with our specialist team. Children and their families can also access early intervention and school support services to enhance development in their early years of life.

⑥

Support for life— accessing tailored care and ongoing support

Whenever and wherever you need us, we're here for you—providing a lifetime of tailored support for both you and your family. This can include ongoing therapy and allied health services, regular assessments, after hours technical support, and access to technology upgrades.





Cochlear implants for babies and toddlers

Cochlear implants can help babies and toddlers to access sound, develop speech and language, setting the foundation for learning that supports education, social skills and interaction at every stage of their lives.



Give your child access to a world of sound



Did you know?

While outcomes will differ for each child, a cochlear implant combined with early intervention, gives your child the best chance of:

- Having hearing stability throughout their life.
- Achieving the expected language and speech outcomes for their age.
- Requiring fewer hearing supports later in life.

For babies and toddlers, a cochlear implant can open up access to a world of sound, help them develop critical speech, language and listening skills, and give them the confidence to explore their world.

From the first time your baby hears your voice, they are beginning to listen and learn about the world around them and starting on their journey to critical early language and speech development.

For babies and toddlers who are deaf or hard of hearing, this journey can be challenging. The earlier a child has access to sound, the more likely they are to reach their hearing potential.

A cochlear implant can be a suitable option for infants as young as three months, ensuring your child has the same opportunity to develop listening and language as their hearing peers.

Exploring cochlear implants for your child

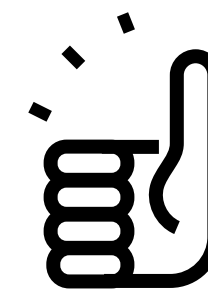
We understand that as a parent, guardian or caregiver, a decision that involves your child's health is never made lightly, and that's why we're with you and your family, from the very beginning.

Every family is different and whether a cochlear implant is suited to your child will depend on the type of hearing loss, your family needs and your wishes for their future.

We'll only suggest a cochlear implant for your child when we have determined that it can achieve the best possible outcomes, and that an implant aligns with your family's goals and wishes.



It starts with you—and understanding your family's needs



This stage can include testing to understand how your child's hearing is functioning and how they respond to sound. These are safe and non-invasive tests, performed by an audiologist, speech pathologist or specialist teacher through age-appropriate activities and play.

Testing can include:

Auditory Brainstem Response (ABR) testing performed by an audiologist to determine how a child's brain responds to sound. It's done by wearing entirely safe external sensors during sleep.

Visual Response Orientation Audiometry (VROA) is performed by an audiologist to determine how your child responds to sound when awake. Sound is played through headphones and your child is given age-appropriate visual rewards to encourage and support responses in a play-based environment.

Behavioural Observation Audiometry (BOA) is an alternative to VROA, often used for infants and children who can't physically turn towards the sound. It involves an audiologist observing how your child or infant responds to audio cues.

Aided Cortical Assessment Testing measures how your child's brain responds to sound when awake. It's entirely safe and uses external electrodes to measure brain activity when a series of sounds are played.

Which tests will my child need?

Every child is different, and it depends on your child's hearing loss and individual circumstances and needs. We'll keep you informed of any testing your child requires and give you opportunities to access further information and ask any questions before testing takes place.

Empowering you to make the best decision for your child

You know your child and family best. It's our role to support you on your individual journey—whatever path you take.

We help you understand the range of possible outcomes and give you the information you need to make an informed decision.

Through consultation with experts, meeting other families who have received cochlear implants, and taking part in information sessions you'll have the opportunity to ask questions, discuss your concerns and share your experience.

We respect your decision

Ultimately, the decision is yours and we support whatever decision you make for your child. If you decide not to proceed with a cochlear implant, we'll continue to support you and your child with the right mix of hearing and communication services to support their needs.



An expert team in your corner

The NextSense team are world leaders in paediatric cochlear implantation. We build a dedicated, expert team around your family, focused on helping your child reach their goals.

If you decide to proceed with a cochlear implant, you'll have a tailored team of professionals in your corner who support your child and your family every step of the way.

Your NextSense team can include:



Paediatric audiologists



Leading ENT surgeons

who are experienced in working with babies and children.



Specialist teachers



Speech pathologists



Age-appropriate specific specialists supporting early learning through to high school years.



Allied health and therapy professionals to support your child's unique needs.



Family support services

Give your child the best possible start

With quality support early in your child's life, you can help them develop critical life skills, build confidence and set the foundations for a lifetime of learning.

Specifically designed for your child and your family, NextSense offers seamless access to the services that will help your child reach their goals, and give them the confidence to connect with the world around them.

Working together as part of an expert team, NextSense specialists will create an individual program for your family, designed to give your child the support they need from birth onwards. The program can be designed to support all children who are deaf or hard of hearing, including those with complex diagnoses or additional disabilities.



For many children, early intervention can lead to needing fewer supports later in life, more confidence and increased participation in everyday activities.

Coordinated by a key worker, your dedicated consultant ensures you can access the services your child needs, your program can include:

- speech, listening and communication therapies
- occupational and physical therapies
- access to assistive technologies
- family support services
- in-classroom support at your child's day care or preschool
- playgroups and parent meet-ups
- Connected Services delivered at home for those who cannot access a NextSense centre
- high-quality interpreting services, if required, so you can access services in the language you choose.

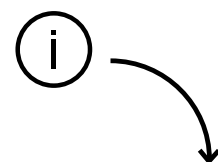




Cochlear implants for children and teenagers

From the classroom to the community, cochlear implants can help children and teenagers connect with the world around them, access educational opportunities and increase participation in all aspects of life.

Give your child the confidence to make the most of everyday



From the time your child starts school, they are developing independence, new social connections, and their own view of the world. A cochlear implant supports your child or teenager to participate to the fullest and make the most of everyday.

Sometimes, children can begin to lose their hearing later in childhood, and into their teens. During this time, they are experiencing a time of rapid learning, growth and change. A cochlear implant can:

- increase listening and language skills
- access educational materials and curriculum in the classroom
- build social connections and interact with the world around them
- develop critical life skills and the confidence to approach new challenges.

Bilateral implants (implants in both ears) enable your child to experience stereo hearing, a more natural and comfortable state. Research shows bilateral implants increase speech understanding up to nine fold. Recipients also report being able to hear better in noisy environments, feeling less tired at the end of the day and being more comfortable in social and educational settings.

Did you know?

Today's technologies enable cochlear implant recipients to stream sound directly from smart devices, like mobile phones and TVs.





It's your journey and your decision

You know your child and family best. It's our role to support you on your individual journey—whatever path you take. We help you understand the range of possible outcomes and give you the information you need to make an informed decision.

Through consultation with experts, meeting other families who have received cochlear implants, and taking part in information sessions you'll have the opportunity to ask questions, discuss your concerns and share your experience.



We respect your decision

Ultimately, the decision is yours and we support whatever decision you make for your child. If you decide not to proceed with a cochlear implant, we'll continue to support you and your child with the right mix of hearing and communication services to support their needs.

Supporting your child every step of the way



We'll work with you to ensure your child gets the most out of their cochlear implant. Your multidisciplinary team will work with you to deliver an individual integrated plan. This can include:



Leading ENT surgeons
who are experienced in working with children and adolescents.



A dedicated specialist teacher,
who supports your child at their mainstream, independent school or in our specialist school for children who are deaf or hard of hearing.



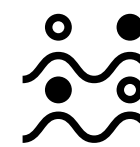
Allied health services,
such as occupational therapy, physiotherapy and speech pathology.



Family support services
to support your child and your family through life's transitions and challenges.



Guidance on and advocacy for assistive technologies
to make the most of learning.



Access to a connected community
to share experiences and build lifelong friendships.



Parent information and support services
to give you the tools and confidence to support your child's learning and development.



Training opportunities for your local school teachers
to provide the tools to support your child in the classroom, use hearing technologies, structure an inclusive curriculum and create a supportive classroom environment.



Cochlear implants for adults

Whether your hearing loss has been gradual or it has occurred suddenly, a cochlear implant can increase access to sound, even in noisy environments, to help you live life to the fullest.

Sometimes hearing aids aren't enough

If you have trouble hearing on the phone or in noisy environments, if speech and sounds are muffled and garbled or if your hearing aids simply aren't enough, a cochlear implant may be a suitable solution.

Hearing loss can have a significant impact on the way you live your life. A cochlear implant can be a suitable option for adults and seniors of any age, right up to those aged in their nineties.

Improving your hearing can help you better connect with loved ones—in person and on the phone. You'll feel more confident to participate everyday activities—at work, at home, and in social environments.

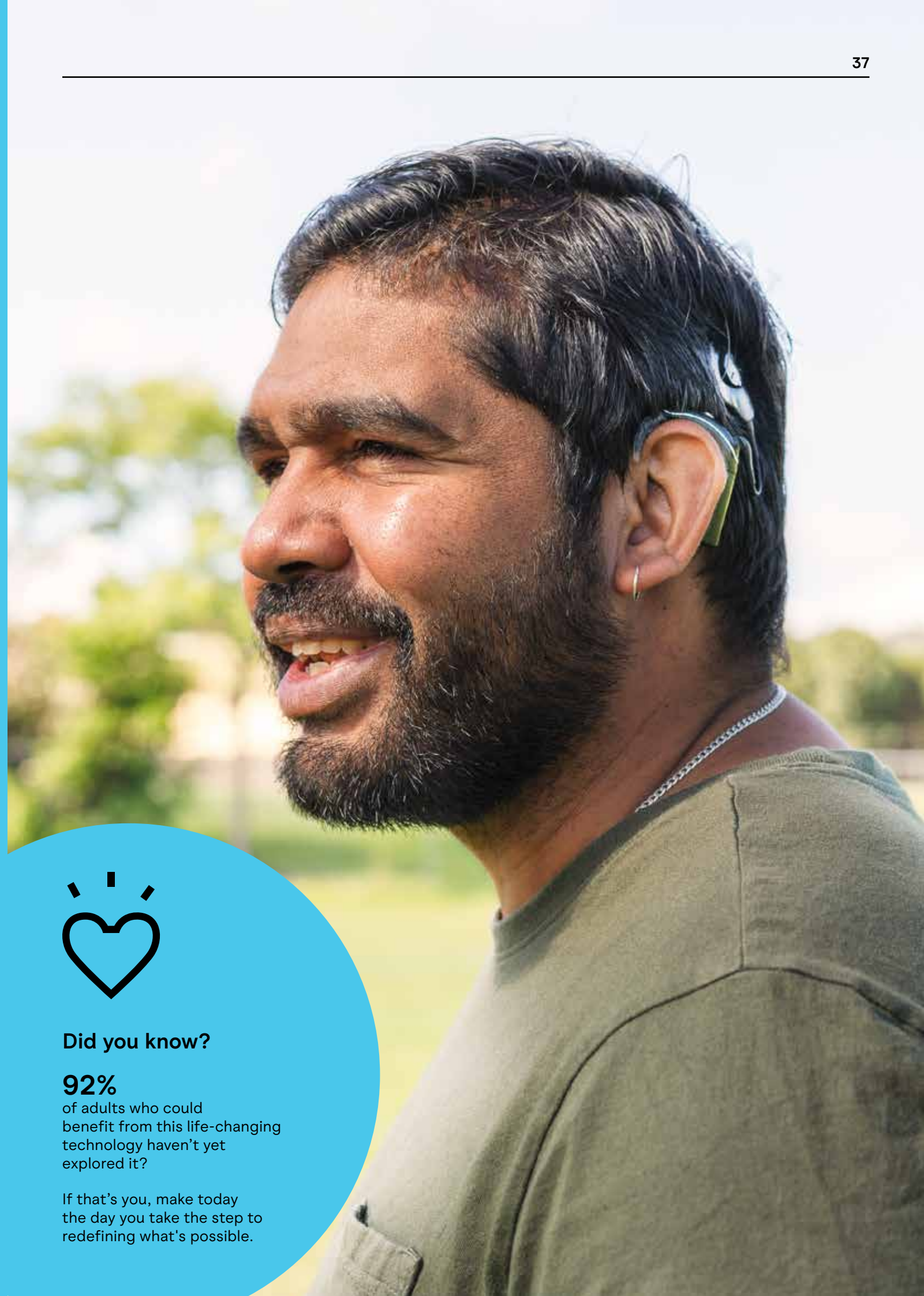


Did you know?

92%

of adults who could benefit from this life-changing technology haven't yet explored it?

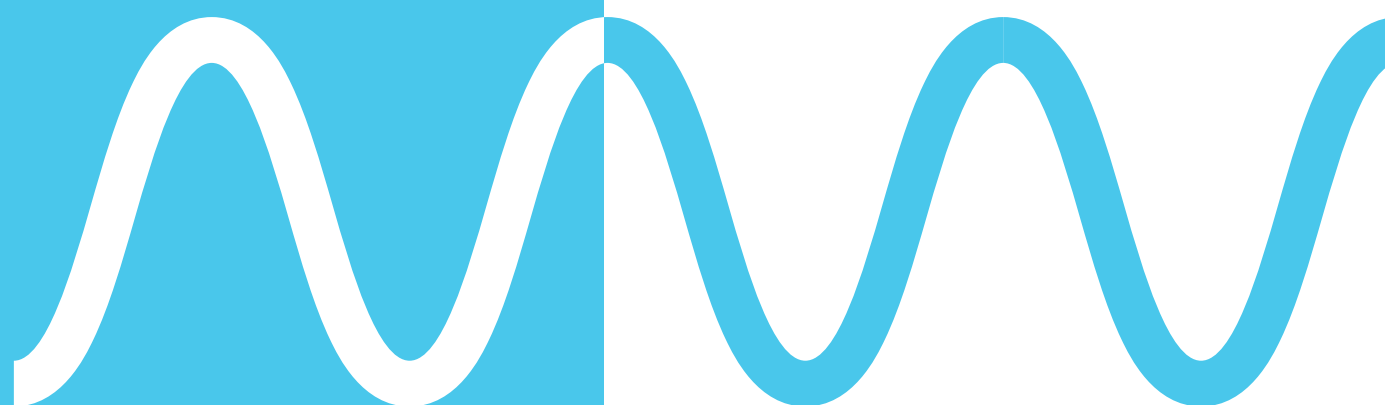
If that's you, make today the day you take the step to redefining what's possible.



We're in this together

Every journey is different. We take a client-centred approach, delivering the individual support you need to make the most of your hearing.

From your first assessment to a lifetime of care, we're with you—providing the information, support and advice you need to make decisions about your health and lifestyle to rediscover your life through sound.



We'll tailor support services to your specific needs and desired outcomes, and build an expert team around you.



Leading ENT surgeons
will oversee your suitability for a cochlear implant.



Highly trained audiologists
will take you through the cochlear implant journey.



Auditory rehabilitation specialists
will guide your listening journey to help you live life to its fullest.



Technical clinical support program
providing you technical support, troubleshooting and after hours support services for you and your family.



A cochlear implant can be life-changing

NextSense offers a range of auditory rehabilitation services to help you live life to the fullest.

A cochlear implant can allow you to reconnect with your family and the things you love most. From watching your favourite television program to joining in conversations at noisy restaurants, or simply experiencing your world through sound—your cochlear implant can enhance your life in many ways, big and small.

When your cochlear implant is switched on, you may need additional support to access and understand the sounds around you—particularly if you have been experiencing hearing loss for some time.

To get the most out of your cochlear implant every day, NextSense will work with you to design a rehabilitation program that supports your communication goals.

Working with an audiologist or speech therapist, your rehabilitation program can include:

- in-clinic sessions and activities designed to increase your ability to interpret sounds
- speech and communication therapies
- support and strategies to enhance listening in different environments
- technical support and access to assistive technologies.

Here to answer your questions

NextSense is a not-for-profit organisation and a registered NDIS provider. We pride ourselves on providing client-centred care to the thousands of Australians who need us.

In this section, you'll find important information on our policies and answers to frequently asked questions.



Our policies and your rights

At NextSense, we are focused on delivering evidence-based services based on the latest research in an environment that is sensitive to the cultural and linguistic needs of our clients. All our services are delivered in line with NextSense policies, practices and Australian legislative requirements.

Our privacy policy

Your records and personal information will remain confidential and we will only pass them on or discuss them with your permission. If we receive information from other organisations, we'll make sure you receive a copy.

You can access your or your child's information at any time, and we'll show you written reports before distributing them to other agencies. Our services comply with federal state and territory disability service legislation and privacy legislation. Our full privacy policy is available at nextsense.org.au

Support when English is not your first language

We understand the importance of accessing services and language development in the language of your choice. If you need an interpreter, please let us know when making your first appointment.



Share your feedback

We welcome feedback. You can share yours at any one of our centres or email us at hello@nextsense.org.au

To find out
more, visit our
website

nextsense.org.au

Frequently Asked Questions

Is age a barrier to getting a cochlear implant?

No. NextSense has achieved successful outcomes for people of all ages, from children under twelve months to those aged in their nineties.

How much does a cochlear implant cost?

NextSense is here to support you in exploring the funding options available to you. Our supporting audiology services are bulk-billed through Medicare, and there are many public and private funding options for the surgical component at minimal or no cost to you.

As a registered NDIS provider, NextSense can also provide appropriate therapy services to eligible families under this scheme.

How long will the procedure take?

Surgery usually takes 2-3 hours and is usually performed under general anaesthetic—by a leading NextSense surgeon—at a public or private hospital. Usually, you'll be required to stay overnight, and many people return home the next day.

How long will it take to recover?

While recovery time will vary depending on your health and lifestyle, many people report being back doing everyday activities within a week.

Here, we've answered some of the questions we get most. But if there's other questions you have—get in touch.

How long do cochlear implants last?

Your cochlear implant is designed to last a lifetime. As technology advances, upgrades to your external sound processor are easily completed without the need for further surgery.

Can I access therapy services if I don't live near a major city?

NextSense has an extensive network across the country. If you can't access a NextSense centre, we can support you at home, via high-quality video conferencing.

Are services available in languages other than English?

Yes. We provide access to high-quality, expert interpreter services for those who require support in their chosen language, which can be funded under NDIS for eligible clients.

Will NextSense support me if I don't go ahead with a cochlear implant?

Yes. We're here to provide you with the information, advice and support you need to make the right decision for you and your family. We will respect whatever decision you make. NextSense provides a range of services and holistic care for people who are deaf or hard of hearing, and will continue to offer support tailored to your needs, even if you decide not to proceed.

Research for today and tomorrow



To ensure you and your family receive the best possible care and outcomes, we collaborate with leading practitioners, researchers, health services, and industry partners to undertake cutting-edge research and education programs.

If you are someone who is deaf or hard of hearing, your input into the future of hearing services and technologies is invaluable to ensure we can continue to deliver the best services, care and outcomes for generations to come.

Play a part in the future of hearing services

We offer many opportunities for NextSense clients to participate in research projects, which can include:

- completing surveys
- trialling new assistive or hearing technologies
- taking part in innovative new services.

If you're interested in finding out more about how you can play a part in the future of hearing services, contact the NextSense team.



Australian Hearing Hub

We're a founding member of the Australian Hearing Hub, a centre that unites researchers, educators, clinicians and innovators in an innovative collaboration—to deliver ground-breaking research on hearing loss in adults and children, technological and environmental solutions for hearing loss, intervention and prevention.

Based at Macquarie University, the centre also gives the next generation of health professionals unrivalled opportunity to learn about hearing loss, and ensure we stay at the forefront of innovation and best practice.

The NextSense

Advancing 160 years' experience

We've been providing services since 1860, with an eye on the innovation of tomorrow.

For everyone, right across Australia

No matter your age, your needs, or where you live, we reach people who need us.

Not-for-profit service

We're not for profit. That means we can focus on your needs.

Care for children, individuals, and families

We pride ourselves on collaborating with families, building relationships, and supporting a whole community.

Holistic support from an expert team

Our wide range of experts work holistically to create your unique program of care, coordinated by a key worker, who ensures your services, care and goals are integrated across your team.

Registered NDIS provider

We partner with you on your NDIS journey.

Australia's largest cochlear implant program

We provide access to leading professionals and ongoing care for thousands of Australians.

World leading research and education

Discover our specialist postgraduate and continuing professional education programs.

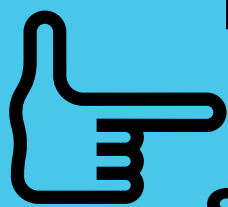
difference



Every journey is different

The information in this handbook is designed to support the individual advice you receive from our expert team.

We encourage you to get in touch with our dedicated Client Care Team to discuss your specific journey and find out more about how we can support you and your family.



**Take the
next
step**



1300 581 391



hello@nextsense.org.au

We'll connect you with an
experienced team member
to discuss your needs.