



Cochlear Implant Center
**Westchester
Medical Center**
Westchester Medical Center Health Network

CochlearConnections

News from the Cochlear Implant Center | Summer 2023

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The Cochlear Implant Center at Westchester Medical Center, flagship of the Westchester Medical Center Health Network (WMCHHealth), provides coordinated audiology and speech-therapy services for cochlear implant patients and those considering this life-changing technology. It is the only center between New York City and Albany providing comprehensive services for children and adult patients.

The Cochlear Implant Center is staffed by a team of highly trained audiologists and speech pathologists with expertise in evaluation and rehabilitation services for individuals who are cochlear implant candidates and those who receive a cochlear implant. Cochlear implantation is a highly successful technology that allows deaf children to hear and speak, and enables deafened adults to enhance their lives. The Cochlear Implant Center provides comprehensive services such as individualized programming of the implant and speech-therapy services.



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American Cochlear Implant Alliance

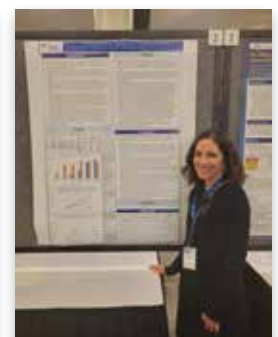
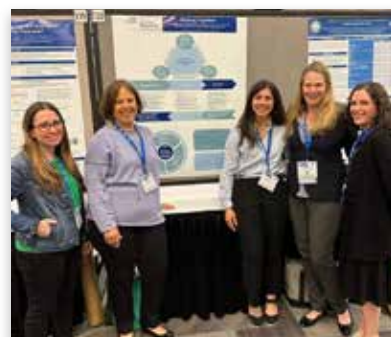
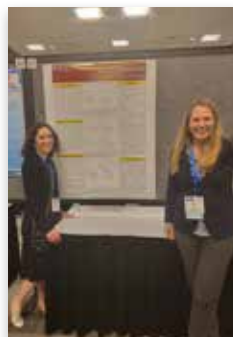
CI2023 Dallas Meeting

The team of professionals from the Cochlear Implant Center at Westchester Medical Center (WMC) traveled to Texas for the American Cochlear Implant Alliance (ACIA) CI2023 Dallas meeting. They were excited to be at the conference with colleagues from all over the country and also honored to contribute to the scientific content presented at the meeting.



Katrina Stidham, MD, Chief of Neurotology, delivered a platform presentation on *SmartNav*, an intraoperative measurement system developed by Cochlear Americas. A poster on electrocochleography (EcochG) by Dr. Stidham, Rivka Bornstein, AuD, Regina Albinus, MS, and students from New York Medical College was accepted by ACIA and presented by Drs. Bornstein and Stidham while at the conference. Dr. Bornstein also presented a poster on pediatric single-sided deafness in collaboration with Samantha Morgan, AuD, and students from New York Medical College. Dr. Bornstein and Michelle Albera, SLP, AVT, had an accepted poster on the invisible disability of single-sided deafness. In a collective effort, the team presented a poster on hearing together, a multidisciplinary team approach to cochlear implantation.

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Free Dehumidifier!

Did you know that you have a free dehumidifier in your implant kit?

When an implant is first activated, patients are sent home with a lot of equipment.

Within every big backpack, there is a dehumidifier! The dehumidifier removes moisture from the implant processor, to keep the devices working well.



Why should I use the dehumidifier?

As the weather gets warmer, sweat and humidity can collect in the microphones of the processor. By using the dehumidifier, the moisture is removed and the processor is less likely to break down.

How do I use the dehumidifier?

Before going to sleep, simply take the processor off the head and put the battery in the charger. Place everything but the battery into the dehumidifier. Plug the dehumidifier in, and turn it on.

Patient Perspective:

Jessica Weisbrod

Jessica is a 44-year-old woman who had a virus six years ago, causing progressive hearing loss in both ears. She successfully used hearing aids for a period of time but quickly lost all hearing in her right ear and for a few years used only her hearing in her left ear. In March of 2023 she suddenly lost all of her hearing in the left ear. Hearing aids were no longer helpful and she could not communicate with family or work following the sudden loss. Six weeks later, she received a cochlear implant in her right ear at WMCHHealth. She will get a second implant soon! Let's learn a little about Jessica's recent experience with her hearing loss and cochlear implant.



Q: What made you decide to get a cochlear implant?

I totally lost my hearing after a few years with hearing aids. My 4-½ year old son was so frustrated that I could not hear him that his behavior changed. It was difficult for him to use the voice-to-text app on my phone and it really affected him.

Q: What was it like when your cochlear implant was initially activated?

It was amazing. We met my son and his grandfather for dinner and when I told him that I could hear him he was so excited, gave me the biggest hug ever, and hung onto me for the entire dinner and afterwards.

Q: How have your family and colleagues reacted to the change in your hearing?

Everyone is thrilled that I can now hear them speak. It has made everything better, especially for my son. His behavior has returned to how it was before my one and a half months of total deafness.

Q: What advice would you give to someone who is thinking about pursuing cochlear implantation?

This technology has saved my life! The difficulty for everyone around me, who was so used to me being able to hear and speak, made them anxious and frustrated since it was so difficult to communicate with me. It took less than a whole day to get used to this and now it has become second nature for me. My 4-½ year old son has benefited the most, as it was so difficult for him to understand why all of a sudden I could not hear him.

I suggest that you get it done as quickly as possible. It really was fantastic for me and really saved my life and the life of my son. It could save yours as well!



Educational Advocacy Events

Parent/Child Event

On March 19, 2023, the Cochlear Implant Center hosted our first educational advocacy lecture and social event, *Succeeding At School with Hearing Loss and Cochlear Implants*. This event was sponsored by Partners in Hearing as part of an educational advocacy series for our cochlear implant patients. Parents attended a lecture on how to improve access to services for children with hearing loss, while the children had time to meet other implant kids and join in on some fun crafts and activities. It was wonderful to be back in person for an event and everyone had a great time.

We hope that this is the first of many family educational programs, so keep an eye out for another fun event next year!



Professional Event



This fall, the Cochlear Implant Center will host a daylong seminar for professionals who care for our implant kids at school. The seminar, entitled, *Facilitating Academic Success for Children with Cochlear Implants and Hearing Aids*, will be sponsored by Partners in Hearing, a non-profit organization that helps support children with cochlear implants. The goal of this seminar is to provide school audiologists, speech pathologists, teachers of the hearing-impaired, and classroom teachers the necessary tools to help our cochlear implant children succeed in the classroom.

Let your school providers know about this wonderful educational event coming up on October 20, 2023!



HLAA Walk for Hearing

On May 6, 2023, we joined the Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA) Westchester Chapter in their annual Walk for Hearing. The WMCHealth Cochlear Implant Center was a Gold-level sponsor of the event. Our CI team and many of our patients were there to show their support. It was a perfect day for a walk and a good time was had by all.



The HLAA is a grassroots organization providing support for children and adults with hearing loss. To learn more about the HLAA Westchester Chapter, check out their website at hlaawestchester.org.



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Here is an excerpt from the hearing together poster!




The WMC Cochlear Implant Center is proud to be an ACIA Organizational Member. The ACIA is a not-for-profit organization created for the purpose of eliminating barriers to cochlear implantation. The ACIA sponsors research and actively advocates for improved access to cochlear implants for patients of all ages. Members include clinicians, scientists, and educators as well as patient and consumer advocates. Drs. Stidham and Morgan continue to serve as ACIA New York State Champions, working with the ACIA to help effect policy changes for individuals with hearing loss at the state and national level. For more information about the ACIA, check out their website at acalliance.org.



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Cochlear Implant Tips for Summer

Warm weather is finally here! Keeping your or your child's sound processor working at its optimized level can be a challenge in the summer. The sound processors are delicate instruments that are impacted by moisture, dust, and physical damage. Here are some tips to make sure your processors continue working throughout the summer months:

- **Use your water-wear option!** Each manufacturer has waterproofing options for their sound processors.



- **Use your active-wear or retention options including headbands, safety lines, or hats.** This will make sure your processors don't fall off or get lost when enjoying the hot summer weather.



- **If your processor has a compatible smart phone app, make sure to pair your processor to your phone and activate the location settings.** This way, if the processor is lost, there is greater likelihood it can be found!

- **Use your dehumidifier every night!** If something does happen to your processor or equipment, don't delay! Contact the manufacturer right away for repair or replacement parts.