

Cochlear implants and skin health information leaflet

You have been given this leaflet because you have a cochlear implant and wear a sound processor. **Most people wear their processor without any issues.** It is important to regularly check the skin over and around the implant, under the magnet and around where the processor rests. This information will help you, your family member, friend or carer know what to look for and what to do if things don't look or feel right.

Skin health

The coil/headpiece of your processor sticks on to your head using a magnet. The magnet needs to be just tight enough that your processor doesn't keep falling off in everyday use, but not too tight. Your processor may fall off if you are doing sport or being very active – please ask your cochlear implant centre for clips or other retention solutions that can help.

Healthy implant site:



If the magnet is too tight or there is a problem, the skin can hurt or ache, feel sore, numb, hot or different, or there may be redness or a burning sensation. If this continues, it can cause the skin to break down. This may mean you cannot wear your processor for a while. If the skin continues to get worse, this can be serious, and you may need another operation. This is rare, but we want you to take care of your skin to try and stop this happening. Older adults or people who have lost a lot of weight can have thinner skin, so may be more likely to have problems.

What can I do?

We recommend checking once a week. **Feel** the skin over and around the implant to check for any swelling or pain. Please ask someone to **look** at the skin over and around the implant, your surgery scar and all areas of the ear where the processor rests. They may need to part your hair or use hair clips to do this.

Here is a video which shows you how to check your implant site: click this link <https://bit.ly/BCIGadultskin> or hold your phone camera over this QR code.

Check:

- Are there any changes in the skin, such as redness, soreness or swelling?
- Is there an impression, mark or indent in the skin where the magnet is?
- Is the coil or headpiece in a different place than it was?



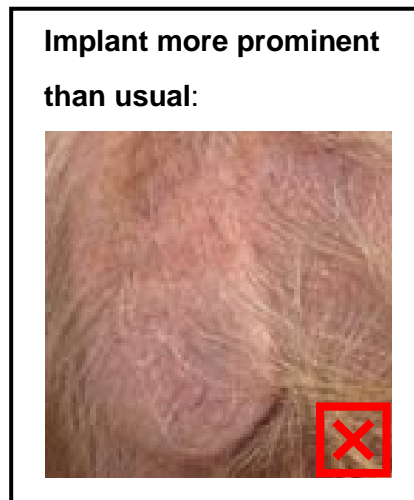
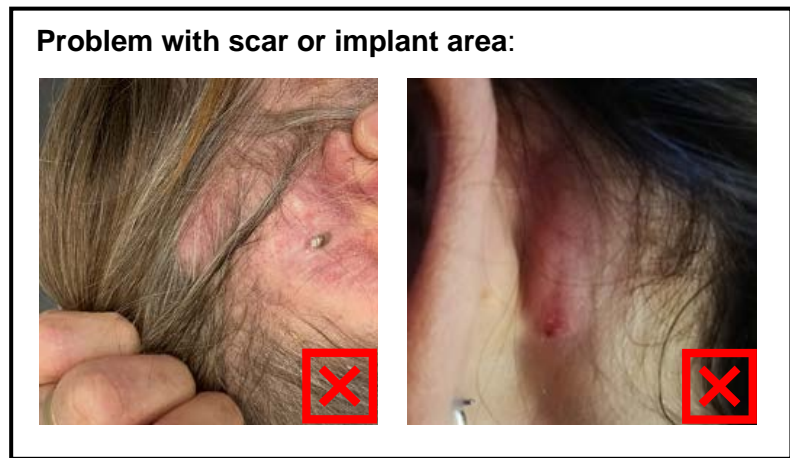
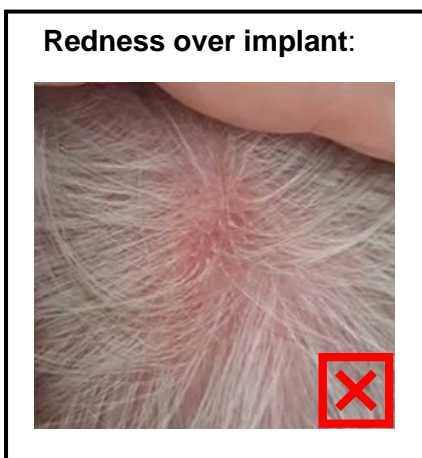
If the answer is **YES** to any of these, you need to do something.

First:

- Please tell your CI centre
- If you have been wearing your processor at night, try taking it off to give your skin a rest.
- Is your skin irritated by another item you are using, for example glasses, a headrest or a helmet? Consider adjustment of your glasses for example.
- Contact your cochlear implant centre and ask for a weaker magnet.
- Try using a little patch of 'moleskin' padding stuck onto the processor where there is soreness; you can buy moleskin at a pharmacy. It is a bit like a plaster. Be careful not to cover the processor microphones.

If things do not get better within 3 days, please contact your cochlear implant centre urgently.

Here are some examples of problems:



Other information

Your cochlear implant centre will always be happy to look at photos of your implant site if you are worried or see you in person. If you need any more information, please contact your cochlear implant centre. For general information about cochlear implants see the BCIG website <https://bcig.org.uk>