

(VIDEO) Hope, healing, hearing: How a cochlear implant helps a man hear again

On Dec. 18, 2023, the world went silent for Thomas Campbell. The active and vibrant 70-year-old lost his hearing in his left ear when he was 33 years old. And without much warning, on that December day, his hearing went out in his right ear, leaving him completely unable to hear.

When other medical centers couldn't help, Thomas turned to Mayo Clinic for answers. Dr. Nicholas Deep, a Mayo Clinic otolaryngologist, had a plan.

TAG OUT: Thomas continues to work with Dr. Deep and team to help restore his full hearing. He will have surgery soon to have a second cochlear device implanted.

| Video | Audio |
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| | The laughter of grandkids. |
| | <i>(nat laughter)</i> |
| | In an instant, Thomas Campbell feared he would never hear that laughter again. |
| Thomas Campbell Gilmore, Arizona | "I started getting this weird, you know, weird kind of weird noises, and a hearing just subsided. And then, they just went out." |
| | Thomas lost hearing in his left ear nearly 40 years ago, likely from exposure to loud industrial noises. Now, suddenly, the hearing in his right ear was gone. |
| Thomas Campbell | "All kinds of things are just flashing through your mind — you know, got grandkids, can't hear anything. How am I going to get around? How am I going to communicate? You know, it's just, it's just ... it's pretty, uh, pretty emotional." |
| | After seeing multiple doctors who couldn't help, Thomas turned to Mayo Clinic and Dr. Nicholas Deep. |
| Nicholas Deep, M.D. Otolaryngology Mayo Clinic | "This is a person who was getting by with one ear— very busy running a business — that all of a sudden was sidelined by complete, profound, bilateral hearing loss. We treat hearing loss, sudden hearing loss, as an ENT, as an emergency. And so, of course, we got him right in. We got him a hearing test, confirmed the hearing loss and started working to rehabilitate his right ear." |
| | But it would take time to. And Dr. Deep had another idea. |
| Nicholas Deep, M.D. | "His left ear has been deaf for over 35 years, and so I brought up the conversation of a cochlear implant." |
| Nicholas Deep, M.D. | "Those nerve synapses and connections between that ear and the brain, although they haven't been stimulated in many years, they can be revived, and so I felt confident that we could certainly get him back online." |

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| | The surgery itself was less than an hour. |
| Nicholas Deep, M.D. | "The cochlear implant has two components: an internal component that we place the time of surgery, and the external component, which is the microphone. That's sort of like a hearing aid, but it sticks on by a magnet." |
| | Implanting the cochlear device was one step. Next was programming the device. |
| Courtney Kolberg, Au.D. Audiology Mayo Clinic | "An audiologist's job is to make the implant work. So we are actually determining what sound is sent through the implant in order to get the patient hearing optimally." |
| | Success is about collaboration, says Dr. Courtney Kolberg, a Mayo Clinic audiologist. |
| Courtney Kolberg, Au.D. | "The patient journey is really a journey that we take together." |
| | And for Thomas, it's been quite the journey. |
| Thomas Campbell | "I can't say enough about it, about the implant, the doctor — about, you know, Mayo Clinic. That's just been unbelievable. Hearing grandkids again ... pretty incredible." |
| | For the Mayo Clinic News Network, I'm Joel Streed. |