

The Internet and Patient Advice



In recent years with the advent of social media and other online forums and self-help web-sites, individuals have at their disposal a community of people that they may turn to for advice, support, and shared experiences.

This is something the SCIP is aware of and to this end we have our own Facebook forum that provides an opportunity for patients to connect.

While we don't discourage people from joining online communities, we would offer the following advice:

1. Any advice about your care provided by unqualified individuals should be balanced alongside advice from your provider.
2. We encourage you to contact your specialist at your cochlear implant clinic. If your own specialist is not available other qualified staff may be available to assist.
3. Online forums particularly overseas sites may offer advice that has no relevance to the New Zealand environment both in terms of the treatments available (or recommended) and the regulatory framework.
4. Patient care is individual and the experience of others even in what you believe to be similar circumstances may not be relevant to your own care.
5. Advice dispensed by those without the appropriate qualifications may be misleading. This may have a number of unintended consequences:
 - Patients may develop unrealistic expectations about their own care
 - Patients may be made to feel unnecessarily anxious when advice is dispensed that may not apply to their situation, or which is inaccurate
 - Patients may have their health put at risk by following unqualified advice

Patients may contact the SCIP for advice about any aspect of their own care.

Specialists at your cochlear implant clinic, while also in the best position to offer advice about your individual needs, are also bound by regulatory codes such as those of the Health and Disability Commissioner's Code of Patient Rights, as well as their own professional body's Code of Ethics.