

# Cochlear Family

Keeping you supported, connected, inspired

Issue 04 2021

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# TV star ‘Incredible Hulk’ now hears with a cochlear implant

Lou Ferrigno, most known for his role in the hit American TV series The Incredible Hulk, has taken the step to treat his sensorineural hearing loss with a cochlear implant to help achieve his goal to remain fit and healthy as he ages.

“My cochlear implant has so quickly taken me to a new level of hearing. It’s like I’m reliving my life again.”

– Lou Ferrigno, Cochlear™ Nucleus® recipient



Lou wearing his new Cochlear Kanso 2 Sound Processor

◀ Ferrigno, also the youngest and only two-time consecutive and Guinness World Record™ holder for the International Federation of Bodybuilding and Fitness Mr. Universe title, has been impacted by hearing loss nearly his whole life.

Hearing loss started for Ferrigno when he was a toddler because of ear infections, and he began wearing hearing aids at age four. Over the years, Ferrigno tried a number of different types of hearing aids – none of these helping him achieve the hearing he needed.

In February 2021, Ferrigno underwent surgery for his cochlear implant and uses a **Cochlear Kanso® 2 Sound Processor**.

“I worked very hard to speak and hear with hearing aids for so long, but I finally learned that with my profound hearing loss, the best hearing aid in the world was not going to give me the clarity in speech I needed at my level of loss,” said Ferrigno.

“My cochlear implant has, so quickly, taken me to a new level of hearing. It’s like I’m reliving my life again.

Ferrigno describes the joy of being able to hear his wife, who whispered from 50 feet (approximately 15 meters) away in their home, after his implant was turned on. He

is surprised by the little, ambient noises he can hear now too, like tapping and ticking of home appliances. And he is very much looking forward to hearing his new twin grandchildren.

“I’m someone that has had profound hearing loss almost all my life, so if this cochlear implant is working for me already, it can give other people hope too. I wish I would have entertained a cochlear implant sooner. There is no shame in hearing loss and getting it treated,” said Ferrigno.

Ferrigno has been putting practice into his hearing therapy and rehabilitation as well, underscoring that like working out, hearing rehab takes work, practice and patience. He touts his commitment to rehabilitation, including using hearing therapy apps, watching online talks and movies, as being critical to his fast success with his cochlear implant, stating “The more you put into it, the better it is.”

**Watch Lou’s cochlear implant  
switch on video here**

## “The more you put into it, the better it is.”

– Lou Ferrigno, Cochlear™ Nucleus® recipient

# “I’m unstoppable because I never give up”

Cochlear Family’s Hear My Story feature, gives our recipients and their families a platform to share their hearing journey using their own words. Meet Sandeepa and Santosh from India. They share their son Urvin’s hearing journey and how hearing loss has never stopped their determined son from achieving his dreams.

Our family was overjoyed at the arrival of our son Urvin. We already had a beautiful little girl called, Loveena, and we were excited that we could call ourselves a family of 4. Urvin was about 9 months old when he celebrated his first Diwali. During Diwali celebrations, we noticed that he wasn’t reacting to the loud sounds of fireworks. As parents, it was a very difficult realisation that something could be wrong with Urvin’s hearing.

We immediately arranged for Urvin to have his hearing tested and the results confirmed that he had bilateral profound hearing loss. As much as this news shocked us, we quickly moved on to find solutions - No matter what, we wanted to do everything in our capacity for Urvin. We got to know about the benefits of cochlear implants from the best hearing professionals in the city.

We understood that early intervention is extremely important for speech and language. It became our priority to minimise the number of days Urvin was devoid of sound. We put all of our energy into raising the funds for Urvin’s surgery. It was tough, but we looked at it as an investment into his future. Urvin got his first Cochlear™ implant at ▶



Urvin, Cochlear™ Nucleus® implant recipient, with his parents Sandeepa and Santosh



At the age of 1.5 years. Post-surgery, we saw a completely new side of him. It was almost like he was born again - and this time into a world filled with sounds.

Following Urvin's surgery we followed up with regular speech therapy sessions. It wasn't long before we started to see positive results in his speech and language development. He began speaking words and short sentences. The successful results motivated us to dedicate even more time to his speech therapy. In the meantime, we continued saving up for Urvin's second

surgery because we were certain that hearing with two ears would boost his progress.

Urvin received his second Cochlear implant at the age of 6. Yet again, he flourished as he began to hear more clearly. Communicating in noisy environments became easier for him. He also started excelling in academics and extra-curricular activities like dance, swimming, skating and gymnastics. Another thing we noticed is that Urvin's confidence to socialise and try new things continued to grow every day. Today, he speaks English, Hindi, Marathi, Marwari and Sanskrit. ▶

**“Be positive and work hard even if you don't see success immediately. One day you will know it was all worth it!”**

– Santosh and Sandeepa, parents of Cochlear™ Nucleus® recipient, Urvin.



Urvin with his trophies for academic and mathematical achievements





“I am very proud of everything Urvin has achieved at such a young age. In fact, he inspires me everyday.”

– Loveena, elder sister of Cochlear™ Nucleus® recipient, Urvin.

Urvin with his sister Loveena





Urvin wearing his new Kanso 2 Sound Processors

◀ Urvin has always had keen interest in maths and grammar. This has led him to become one of the top 10 Abacus champions at a National level. Urvin creates magic with numbers and can solve more than 200 math problems in 8 minutes. In 2018, he participated in Olympiad held in Malaysia and won second place.

In November 2020, we made the decision to upgrade Urvin's sound processors to **Nucleus® Kanso® 2**. We know how driven Urvin is and how important hearing is for his continued academic success. As parents, it's important

that we continue to support his goals for the future. When we heard about the benefits and features of the Kanso 2 Sound Processor, we were certain that his hearing and lifestyle would be enhanced by newer technology.

After his Kanso 2 Sound Processors were switched on, we asked Urvin what he thought about them. He said that the biggest difference has been how his "ears feel lighter" and has noticed how clear the sound is. He likes that he can more easily understand conversations in noisy and challenging situations. He also loves that he can hear music, dialogue in movies and phone calls more clearly because of direct streaming.

Because of COVID-19, Urvin's classes have been moved online. He uses his **True Wireless Mini Mic 2+** for his online classes and has said that this helps him feel less tired and stay more focused and attentive during lessons.

For us, the best thing is seeing how Urvin's confidence has seemed to grow even more with his new Kanso 2 Sound Processors. They are barely visible and sit under his hair and we don't have to worry about them falling off when he plays with his sister and friends.

Our journey with Urvin has not been the easiest but has been completely worth it. When we see his determination and passion towards everything he does, we are content that we made the right decisions along his hearing journey and always at the right time. Urvin has a very bright future lying ahead and we are thoroughly excited to watch him spread his wings and fly high!

**"Life is like math. In order to gain the most, you need to learn how to convert the negatives into positives!"**

– Urvin, Bilateral Cochlear™ Nucleus® recipient.

# Did you hear about Apple's plans to create a cochlear implant Memoji?



**Did you hear about Apple's exciting announcement about plans to release a cochlear implant Memoji feature later this year?**

The move means that if you have a cochlear implant and use Apple products, you'll be able to create a Memoji that has a cochlear implant for you to share in digital messages and FaceTime.

Memojis are Apple's version of emoji characters designed to use in electronic messages to help you visually describe your personality and key physical features that are special or defining to you. They are also a way of visually describing the way you are feeling or your mood.

As well as providing a fun new way for recipients to visually represent themselves in digital messages, Cochlear welcomes the move by Apple as an important step to help build awareness and normalise the role cochlear implants play in treating severe to profound hearing loss.

"The Apple Memoji is an important stepping-stone in raising recognition and awareness of cochlear implants around the world," said Julie Ligeti, Director of Global Public Advocacy for Cochlear.

Cochlear works with partners to build awareness, promote inclusion and improve community-wide knowledge about hearing loss and the life-changing role of cochlear implants for many, said Julie. ▶



**“Whilst we are on the right pathway to awareness of cochlear implants, we will only achieve ‘normal’ when cochlear implants are both recognised and understood.”**

“Everyone with an Apple iPhone will have the Memoji, and the scale of Apple’s reach is massive,” she said.

“However, the next and bigger challenge is to make sure that communities not only recognise that the Memoji has a cochlear implant, but they also understand what cochlear implants can do to transform the lives of people with severe to profound hearing loss.

“Whilst we are on the right pathway to awareness of cochlear implants the Memoji helps, we will only achieve ‘normal’ when cochlear implants are both recognised and understood.”

Julie adds that raising awareness of cochlear implants in our communities is also crucial because a lack of awareness means people who could benefit from appropriate treatment for their hearing loss may miss out.

Cochlear is working with partners around the world to address under-recognition of the effectiveness of hearing implants and on improving access for those who could benefit.

### **So, what can you do?**

If you use Apple products and have a cochlear implant, create your own Memoji when it becomes available later this year and share through your messaging channels.

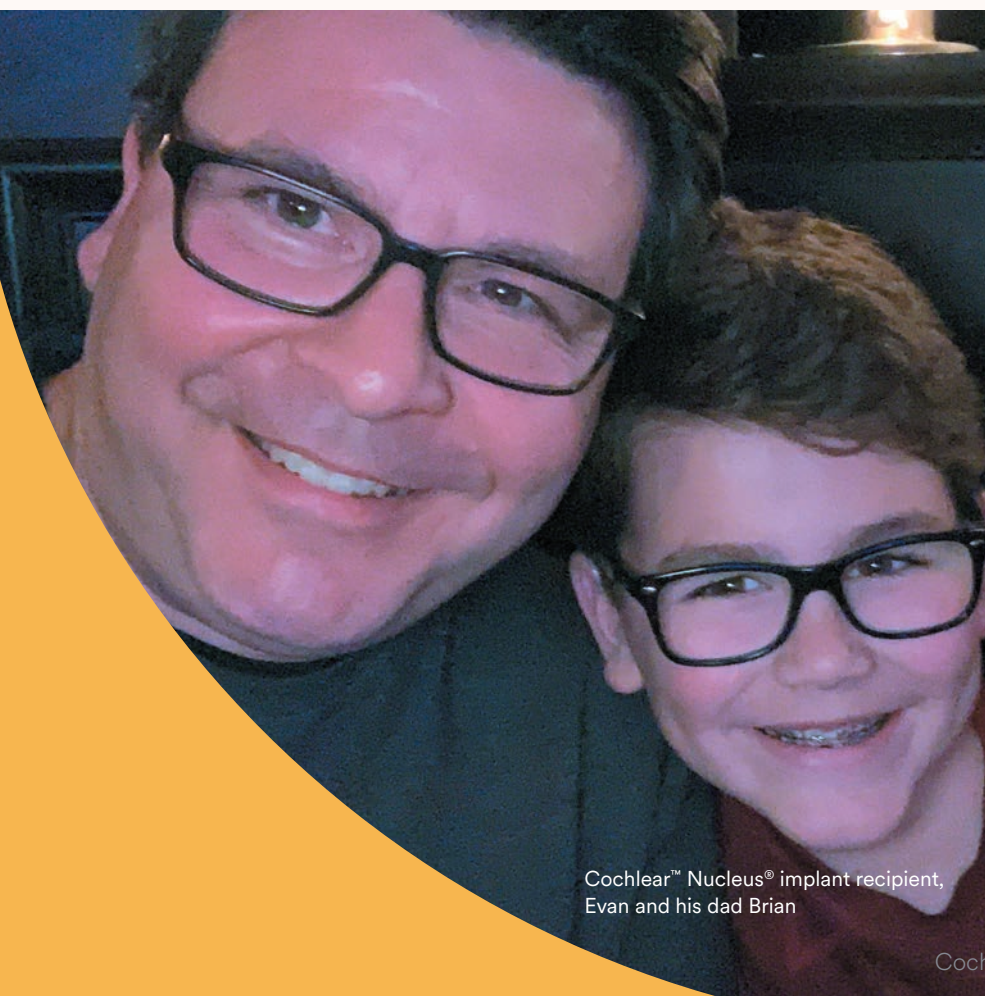
“Public advocacy, the consumer voice and voices of families and loved ones can make a huge and positive difference. The proposal for the Memoji has the support of many consumer advocacy organisations and has been especially championed by Euro-CIU for some years,” said Julie. Euro-CIU is a European region Cochlear Implant User and User family advocacy organisation that has member advocacy organisations across Europe.

“Advocacy can help individuals gain better access to care and support and it can help wider society to learn and understand the needs of people with hearing loss. The views of communities can help to persuade policy makers to make better policies.”

Stay tuned for an update from Apple later in the year about the release of their cochlear implant Memoji and spread the word!

How do you teach your child to take responsibility for their Cochlear™ Sound Processors? Brian, father of 11-year-old Evan, shares his tips to help your child. Staying organised is crucial.

# A dad's tips to keep your child's cochlear kit organised



Cochlear™ Nucleus® implant recipient, Evan and his dad Brian

Tactics for  
storing and  
carrying your  
Cochlear gear ›





◀ Calendar reminders and a specially chosen backpack are just two of the tricks that Evan and his dad Brian use to keep this 11-year old's sound processors and accessories well organised.

Evan received his first Cochlear™ Nucleus® 5 Sound Processors in 2010, when he was age one and upgraded to Nucleus® 6 Sound Processors in 2015. Today he has Nucleus® 7 Sound Processors. Along the way, Evan and his dad have refined their tactics for caring for Evan's sound processors. ▶

“While searching for a solution, I came across camera backpacks. They offered a durable exterior, flexible padded interior storage compartments - which are typically a bright colour - and, of course, straps for hands-free transport.”

## ◀ Choosing a backpack

“While searching for a solution, I came across camera backpacks. They offered a durable exterior, flexible padded interior storage compartments – which are typically a bright colour – and, of course, straps for hands-free transport,” said Brian.

“I am able to store all of Evan’s Nucleus 5, 6 and 7 accessories and backup components in one location for quick access at home or while traveling.”

Brian also feels it’s important for Evan to take just the right amount of responsibility for his sound processors.

“Evan handles a lot of responsibility for his hardware. He manages his wake-up and bedtime routines with his processors. He also advocates for himself at school. Evan can also do basic trouble-shooting activities,” said Brian.

To keep Evan’s processors in top condition, Brian and Evan have regular routines.

“We place Evan’s processors in a dehumidifier each night. We find this is very helpful in the summer months when he sweats more.

“We change the mic covers and the dehumidifier desiccant packs every three months, per recommendation. His processors get cleaned periodically with a soft cloth. I also inspect them on occasion with a magnifying glass to make sure everything looks ok.”

## Calendar reminders

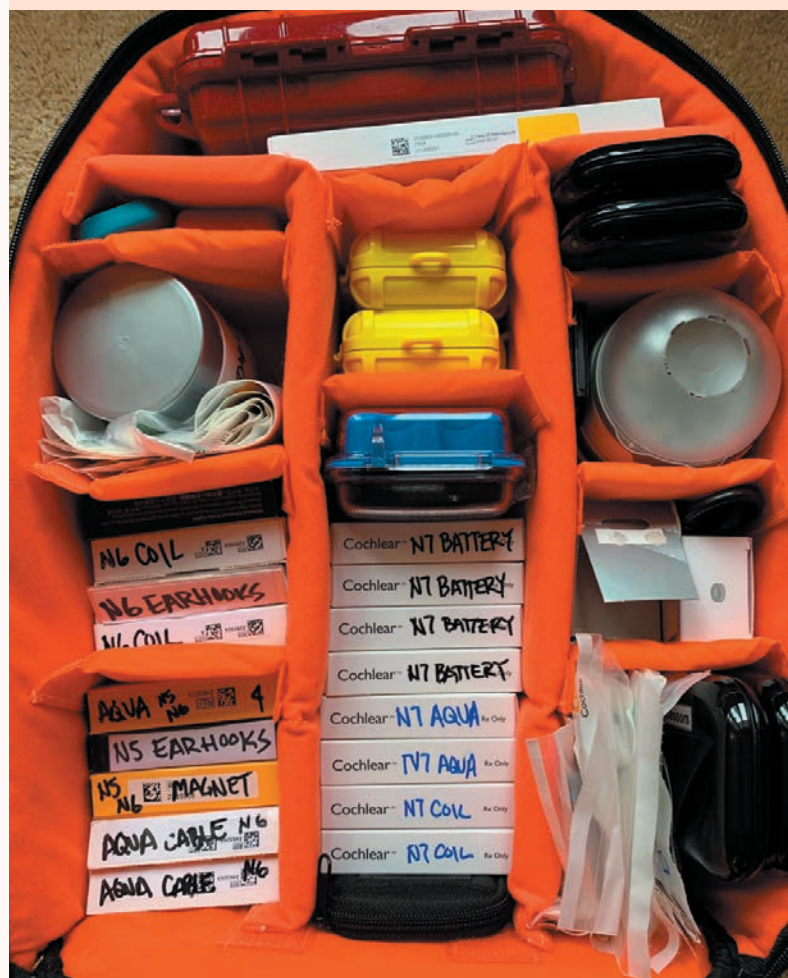
Calendar reminders help Brian and Evan stay on track. “I create a recurring event to change microphone covers and change dehumidifier desiccant packs. All of Evan’s appointments go into the calendar as well,” Brian said.

As a keen swimmer, Evan gets a lot of use from his Aqua+ accessories: “They get very heavy use in the summer months,” said Brian.

Using the Aqua+ silicone sleeve, the sound processor becomes waterproof and swimmable as well. The sleeve offers protection in water up to three metres deep for two hours.

Brian’s top tips for any parent of a child with cochlear implants are simple: “Patience, organisation and educating yourself on the hardware helps a lot. It’s also important to remember that everything is going to be ok.”

“When Evan moved to the Nucleus 7, we needed a more robust storage solution because we were now managing legacy accessories and components for the Nucleus 5 and 6, as well as the 7.”



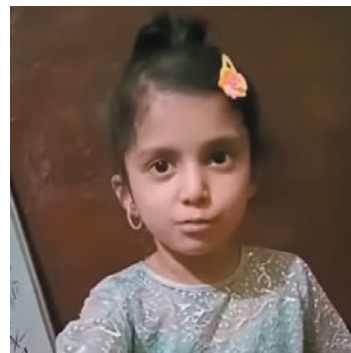
Learn more about Aqua+ and other Cochlear accessories.



# Cochlear's Got Talent



**Winner**  
Anish, 5 years old



**Winner**  
Dhanya, 5 years old

Congratulations to all of our talented young recipients from all across India who entered the Cochlear's Got Talent Competition. [Click here](#) to watch their entries.

# A couple with cochlear implants share tips for post-activation hearing



Debbie and Jeff, Cochlear™ Nucleus® System recipients, Canada.



◀ Debbie and Jeff have found “life more carefree and... spontaneous” since they each received a cochlear implant. The couple had accommodated each other’s hearing loss for most of their 31-year marriage, but now everyday situations are “markedly better” with their Cochlear™ Kanso® Sound Processors and a hearing aid, compared to two hearing aids.

Debbie and Jeff agree that their enjoyment of social events is no longer hampered by where they are seated or efforts to hear conversation. It’s more relaxing to kayak and safer to ride their bikes. Hearing important details in group and educational settings is less stressful.

When Jeff started as a volunteer visiting palliative care patients, he often had to “strain with all his might to hear what they were saying”. Now, Jeff can hear their soft voices “so much better now... it makes these interactions even more special!” Debbie can take the executive minutes of her wine group meetings – something she could not hear well enough to do in the past.

But for Debbie, the first to receive her cochlear implant, learning to distinguish sounds and voices was a hard road. Seeing what Debbie went through in those first two years didn’t dissuade Jeff from getting his surgery, but it did lower his expectations.

“Neither of us perceived very much that first day,” said Debbie of their activation experience. “I heard my audiologist’s voice as ‘boing, boing, boing’ while Jeff described my voice as that of an opera singer and noises like bagpipes in the distance.”

Getting to their current level of hearing has come from a determination “to do whatever it takes to succeed” and with the support of family and friends. In the months following activation, Debbie and Jeff took every opportunity to practise their listening skills and found the following strategies helpful in overcoming the early challenges.

## **Be committed to your auditory rehabilitation**

“I really attacked my auditory training with a vengeance,” says Debbie. “I spent about four hours a day on structured and unstructured exercises in the first year, while Jeff did similar activities and spent about 2.5 hours a day on training his first year.”

## **Incorporate your auditory training into everyday activities**

While taking their dog for a walk, Jeff would name cities around the world for Debbie to practise hearing and repeating. “We made it progressively harder by walking along busier streets and using many different categories of words,” says Jeff who would gradually get farther away from Debbie each time. ▶

“I spent about four hours a day on structured and unstructured exercises in the first year.”

Debbie, Cochlear™ Nucleus® System recipient, Canada.

## Ask friends and family to read to you, while you follow the words in the book

This can be a good way to re-learn the rhythm and pattern of sentences as well as the sound of individual words.

“Don’t forget to sometimes choose people with accents and not the clearest of voices,” said Debbie, whose friend read the Harry Potter books with her over the phone.

## Listen to podcasts and audio books

Listening to podcasts and audio books allow you to choose the volume and speed as well as different accents as you practise with your new device. Debbie began with the clear-speaking hosts of news interviews and now listens to a variety of general interest podcasts most days. Starting six months after activation, Jeff prefers listening to Ted Talks with closed captioning.

## Don’t be afraid to ask for help

“First off, disclose that you have hearing loss and state that you’d be appreciative if they could speak a little slower and louder than normal,” said Jeff. “If you can’t understand someone, ask if they could kindly re-phrase.”

## Have visual resources on hand as a back-up option

Even for those who have had their cochlear implants a long time, some noisy places still pose a challenge for hearing conversation. In the first few weeks while you’re still adjusting to your device, Debbie suggests having on hand a pen and pad or an electronic version such as the ‘notes’ function on your phone. Additionally, there are ‘speech to text’ apps available on the Apple® App Store and Google Play, or you can also use a **Cochlear Mini Microphone 2/2+** to stream audio to your sound processor in group meetings and restaurants where people are difficult to understand or are speaking from a distance.

## Utilise Cochlear’s online resources

Jeff and Debbie used Cochlear’s **‘Adult cochlear implant home-based auditory training manual’** to start identifying the sounds and speech from a checklist of possibilities. Once they progressed beyond the first eight modules, they practiced repeating and understanding speech in quiet and noisy backgrounds.

**Angel Sound™** was another a free online but interactive auditory training and hearing assessment program which helped the couple practise discriminating and identifying sounds and speech.


Now planning for their second surgeries, Debbie and Jeff say they will use the same strategies in learning to hear with both ears.

“However, this time we’ll both be going through our auditory rehabilitation at the time,” said Debbie. “So likely we’ll be pushing, cheerleading and just generally supporting one another in any way we can.”



Debbie and Jeff, Cochlear™ Nucleus® System recipients, Canada.





## Keeping you connected and supported

Thank you for taking care, staying calm and being safe during these uncertain times. We are still contactable and available to assist with your enquiries and support needs, just get in touch with one of our helpful Customer Service team members by emailing [cincustomerservice@cochlear.com](mailto:cincustomerservice@cochlear.com)



# Hear now. And always

As the global leader in implantable hearing solutions, Cochlear is dedicated to helping people with moderate to profound hearing loss experience a life full of hearing. We have provided more than 600,000 implantable devices, helping people of all ages to hear and connect with life's opportunities.

We aim to give people the best lifelong hearing experience and access to innovative future technologies. We have the industry's best clinical, research and support networks.

That's why more people choose Cochlear than any other hearing implant company

[www.cochlear.com/in](http://www.cochlear.com/in)

Please seek advice from your health professional about treatments for hearing loss. Outcomes may vary, and your health professional will advise you about the factors which could affect your outcome. Always read the instructions for use. Not all products are available in all countries. Please contact your local Cochlear representative for product information.

Cochlear™ Nucleus® implant systems are intended for the treatment of moderately severe to profound hearing loss.

Views expressed are those of the individual. Consult your health professional to determine if you are a candidate for Cochlear technology.

Lou Ferrigno is a paid brand advocate for Cochlear, however, medical treatment and health decisions were made independently by him and his hearing health provider.

Cochlear, Hear now. And always, Kanso, Nucleus, True Wireless, and the elliptical logo are either trademarks or registered trademarks of Cochlear Limited.

The Cochlear Nucleus Kanso 2 Sound Processor is compatible with Apple and Android devices. For compatibility information visit [www.cochlear.com/compatibility](http://www.cochlear.com/compatibility)

The Cochlear Nucleus 7 Sound Processors with a Cochlear water protection accessory are dust and water resistant to level IP68 of the International Standard IEC60529 when you use a Cochlear Rechargeable Battery Module. Refer to the relevant User Guide for more information.

Some models of Aqua+ accessories require the earhook to be removed before inserting the sound processor into the accessory. Please consult the instructions for use for more information.

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