

## **Christine**

My name is Chris and I have had my cochlear implant now for 8 years. A bit about my family history: it's an hereditary deafness, but none of us are born deaf, and it does seem to affect more females than males.

In my case, I was 27 when I needed to wear hearing aids and I wore Widex hearing aids for many years. My daughter's hearing deteriorated before mine, and she had CI and that inspired me to come for assessment at the age of 61. They said I would fit all the criteria to have CI, and I was under the care of Mr Pringle and the team here who I found so helpful and so reassuring, and although it was daunting they just put me at my ease really. And anyway, off I went in August 2008 to the QA hospital in Cosham and had my operation.

Mr Pringle came to see me the next day and took the bandage off which was a great relief - that isn't very pleasant, but you just have to put up with it - and I stayed there 2 nights and came home, and then I just carried on really. And actually, after 4 weeks, I went back to work for 2 more weeks before my switch on.

At the switch on, I didn't hear speech at all, I just heard beeps. This was really for the first week or so, and then gradually more speech came, and then after 2 weeks I was hearing speech quite well.

What I used to do, I used to listen to the 6 o'clock news, and I perhaps wouldn't get much at all, and then I would listen to the news again at 10 o'clock. Then as the week progressed I was picking up much more of the speech and after two weeks I was hearing quite well. I was delighted in what I was hearing, and that first year really was the greatest change. After about a year - actually about 18 months - it plateaued, if you like, and I was really delighted in what I was hearing.

Family situations became much more pleasant because I could join the conversations and I could hear my grand-children. Now we have this situation, I am now 70 and several of my friends are developing hearing problems, and in social situations now I sometimes hear better than they do - which I find quite hilarious now actually!

But all in all, it has just been a miracle for me and I am so pleased I had one. I never once for one moment regretted having the operation and I would urge anyone going through the process to go for it because you have nothing to lose and hopefully you will have a great deal to gain.