

# Support for C1 recipients

Frequently Asked Questions - Town Hall Meeting - Jan.08

The following questions represent those most often asked by C1 recipients. These questions and answers are provided to complement the information delivered in the presentation during the recently held Town Hall Web Meetings regarding the availability status of a new C1 Ear-Level processor.

## What is the current plan for C1 users?

After numerous conversations with C1 users, thoughtful deliberation, and research into all possible short and long term solutions, we have decided to develop the **Harmony platform** for C1 users.

## What is your timeline for the new Ear-Level Processor?

The development for the Harmony platform consists of two different software efforts:

- The first involves creating the software that enables the present strategies (CIS, MPS, SAS) to work on Harmony's new electronics;
- The second involves the creation of a system that the audiologist can use to fit the patient.

Each separate software development effort involves about four months to create the code, four months to test it in the laboratory, and four months to test it on patients. Although each effort will be done in parallel, the whole system with both sets of software cannot be tested until both individually have gone through this process. This system testing itself will take from three to six months.

Our best guess is that our work will be completed by the fourth quarter of 2009. At that time, the system will be ready for submission to the regulatory bodies. The submission process may take six months or longer depending on the Agency and any requests for additional testing. Therefore, any guess on timelines and delivery dates for commercial availability would be irresponsible on our behalf.

## Will the new Ear-Level processor come in different sizes?

As with all of our ear level processors, we provide the smallest size possible that will accommodate the sophisticated internal electronics. For this reason, we are only able to provide one size with the processor itself. You can utilize the small and standard sized ear hooks as well as the off-the-ear power options under development. We anticipate that these off-the-ear power options will be useful in improving the retention and reducing the weight and size of the processor module as well as offer extended battery life options.



Harmony with Off-The-Ear Power Option

## Will the new Ear-Level processor work so we can hear better in difficult situations such as noisy restaurants?

We expect that your hearing performance with the new C-1 BTE under development will be comparable to your existing processor.

## Are S-Series users going to be able to use the new BTE?

Yes. However, the technological differences between the S-Series and the new Ear-Level processor may require a few fitting changes for optimally hearing with the new system.

## **Can I be in the patient trials for the new Ear-Level Processor?**

When we are ready to begin our patient trials, we will collaborate with the cochlear implant centres to contact users who might meet the protocol requirements.

## **Can you provide better battery life?**

Today the C1 implant itself consumes the vast majority of the battery power in its operation and advanced sound coding strategies designed to improve hearing. Thus nothing can be done to improve the efficiency of the C1 implant. This means that with current ear level PowerCels, we do not expect any significant change in battery life.

However, we have developed some clever off-the-ear power options designed to substantially improve battery life while simultaneously reducing the size of the processor worn on the ear and we are currently testing a new battery technology which is commercially available that has been developed for cell phone use that may offer slightly greater operating time than our present battery.

## **Will there be a means for us to use the battery PowerPak™? During a power failure, we need to be able to access regular batteries to run our BTEs.**

Yes. We have several off-the-ear power options under development. One of these options, the PowerPak Plus, is designed to use three AAA/LR3 batteries. Another off-the-ear power option under development is the PSP Adapter that can be used with the rechargeable PSP battery as well as the AA/LR6 Battery Compartment. Both of these options will be designed to support the new C1 Ear Level Processor.

## **Does Advanced Bionics plan to develop new coding strategies for us, and when?**

C1 recipients currently have three advanced coding strategies (CIS, MPS, and SAS) available to them. We believe these advanced strategies are still unmatched by competitive implants today. We are continuing to explore the development of other strategies, but thus far have not been able to create any that yield significant performance improvement.

## **Some C-1 users like SAS. Will we be forced to use a HiRes-like processing strategy on SoundWave?**

We anticipate that the new C-1 BTE under development will allow you to continue to use your current CIS, MPS, or SAS speech coding strategy. There may be some audible differences to you due to the platform difference between the current BTE and the Harmony BTE. We anticipate that most recipients will be able to adjust to any difference after a period of use.

## **Will we have the ability to change AGC settings on the new Ear Level through mappings?**

Yes. We plan to have options for AGC 0, I & II based on your preference and performance needs. This will be available on a program-by-program basis to allow you to try different AGC settings in your real world environment.

## **Is there any way to take advantage of the latest programming strategies with my C1?**

Your audiologist is the best person to discuss the options available to you. The new C1 Ear Level processor under development will be unable to deliver HiRes Fidelity 120™ because the C1 internal implant is not capable of supporting this speech coding strategy. C1 recipients currently have three advanced coding strategies available to them. We believe these advanced strategies are still unmatched by competitive implants today.

## **What will be the cost range of the new Ear Level Processor?**

We expect the cost to be comparable with the Harmony processors; however, the details have yet to be defined.

## **Will previous generation processors, the Platinum Series™ Processor, Platinum BTE, S-Series processor, still be supported in future years (e.g., repairs and replacement parts)?**

We plan to support these for as long as possible, but as with most advanced electronic devices, there will come a time when this processor may no longer be supported due to the availability of parts.

## **Will you be able to support my current Platinum BTE while I wait for the new BTE? What if I need to have my current BTE repaired?**

We are making every effort to assure you will have a replacement BTE. Our goal is to build up an adequate supply of Platinum BTE processors to assure that you get a replacement BTE should you need a repair. Please contact Customer Service of Advanced Bionics regarding Platinum BTE availability should you need a repair.

## **My Platinum Series Processor's battery life is still excellent at around 10-12 hours. I can also plug in my iPod and telephone, etc. My body-worn processor still seems to be my best option. What advantage, other than smaller size, does the Ear Level processor provide?**

The new C1 Ear Level offers recipients an alternative processor that provides improved aesthetics, improved accessory connectivity, and off-the-ear power options. In addition, for those patients choosing to go bilateral, this new processor will look the same as the current Harmony processors and allow access to the same accessories.

## **Will AB offer us a trial period with the new ear level processor and allow us to return it for a full refund if we are not happy with it?**

We will look into the possibility of offering a money-back guarantee program for the new C-1 BTE when it is available; however, the details have yet to be defined.

## **What if I do not like the new processor? Will there be an option for me?**

Once the new processor is available for commercial release, you will be given an option to upgrade. It is important to understand that we will not be supporting previous generation processors indefinitely. As with all technologies, there comes a time when they are retired because the internal computer boards become obsolete and no longer commercially available.

## **I am scheduled to receive a second cochlear implant next month. Do you see a significant difference in the implants available today and the one I may receive next month?**

The HiRes 90K® Implant is the current implant available today and the foreseeable future as part of the new Harmony™ HiResolution® Bionic Ear System. The Harmony System supports the HiRes 90K implant with the new Harmony and PSP processors and HiResolution® Sound that includes the latest in speech coding strategies with Fidelity 120™.

## **Should I get my C1 implant replaced with a new HiRes 90K® implant?**

We do not recommend explanting a device for this reason. Some users have pursued a second implant for the non-implanted ear. You should discuss this with your surgeon and audiologist.

## Should I get an implant in my other ear?

The answer to that is unique for each individual and should be discussed with your audiologist and implant surgeon.

## Why should we believe what AB is telling us this time? And how are you going to better demonstrate your commitment to us?

We understand your frustration and disappointment with our delay in delivering you a new BTE. We understand that we have lost your trust and will work to regain it as we work on the development of the new C-1 BTE. Our commitment to you is to communicate more regularly, to keep this project as a top priority, and to continue to listen. We have set up a special email address dedicated to you. It is

**[c1support@advancedbionics.com](mailto:c1support@advancedbionics.com)**

Or contact your Advanced Bionics local representative