Spinal Cord Stimulation - Patient Information No 7

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यदि आपको यह दस्तावेज अपनी भाषा में बाधित तो पेशेंट इनफ्रामेशन की-आर्डिनेटर को टेलीफोन नंबर 0800 0730510 पर फोन करें।

जे तमजे आप यह दस्तावेज अपनी भाषा में बाधित तो पेशेंट इनफ्रामेशन की-आर्डिनेटर को 0800 0730510 पर संपर्क करे।

आपने यदि इस प्रोफाइल को अपने निजी ब्याख्या पेटेंट नंबर के साथ भरना, तदनुसार एलिटेशन पेशेंट इंफ्रामेशन की-आर्डिनेटर के साथ 0800 0730510 नंबर पर संपर्क करें।

If you have difficulty reading this leaflet or speaking English, or if you require translation of the information, please contact the Patient Information Co-ordinator on 0800 0730510.

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Spinal Cord Stimulation

What do we mean by this?

Spinal cord stimulation is a treatment that is used for a variety of persistent pain conditions including:

- Combination of complex back and leg pain
- Complex regional pain syndrome or complex neuropathic pain conditions
- Peripheral vascular disease
- Angina that is not treatable by surgical means

Spinal cord stimulation offers a safe and effective means of managing pain for the above groups of patients.

It has been used for managing pain conditions since the early 1970’s

The treatment involves the insertion of an electrode or electrodes into the epidural space, the same space where you may have had a Lumbar Epidural. The electrodes transmit small electrical impulses, which block the pain signals preventing them reaching the brain. In turn the electrodes are connected to a small internal battery unit, which is controlled by an external programmer that you have control over.

A spinal cord stimulator will not take away all of your pain but it is hoped that your pain levels will be reduced by at least 50%

The insertion of a spinal cord stimulator is a reversible procedure, so removal is possible should it become clinically necessary or if you wish it to be removed, without causing damage to the spine or spinal cord.

Why are you having a Spinal Cord Stimulator?

You are having this form of pain management because:

- The pain that you have is not been effectively managed by medication
- Injections have only produced short term or no reduction in your pain levels.
- Experience and research has shown that people who have pain similar to yours have responded well to this form of management.
**How is this carried out?**

The insertion of a spinal cord stimulator is normally done over two separate theatre sessions, each a week apart.

The first stage is the most complicated as it involves the insertion of the electrode(s). You are awake for this stage; it involves the insertion of the electrode(s) into the epidural space. This is carried out under local anaesthetic and x-ray control as you need to be awake to be able to describe where and what you are feeling.

You will have an incision on your back, which will be closed with surgical staples, which will need to be removed 7-10 days following surgery.

Stage one is the trial stage, this allows both yourself and clinical team to decide if this is the most appropriate and effective form of treatment by determining if the stimulation covers all of your pain and also to allow you to feel what the stimulation feels like, it may be that you don’t like it and don’t wish to proceed. The trial normally takes place for one week with you remaining in hospital for that period of time.

The second stage is when the system is fully implanted and connected to the internal pulse generator and battery unit. You are asleep for this stage. It is a surgical procedure as it involves an incision (cut) being made into your skin in the abdomen and a pocket made to take the receiver, the part that contains the pulse generator and battery unit. The electrodes are connected to extension wires and connected to the receiver. Both the cut on your abdomen and the small cut on your side where the trial wires exited will be closed with surgical staples and covered with a small dressing which will need to be removed 7-10 days after surgery.

It is quite normal to have pain following this type of procedure in both your back and abdomen, bruising is common. Discomfort may be felt for up to six weeks following this type of procedure. It is important to remember that the stimulator will not relieve your postoperative pain, other analgesia will be required.

**What are the risks of having this treatment?**

Like any surgical procedure, the insertion of a spinal cord Stimulator is not without risk.

As you are having a general anaesthetic then you have to know the risks for this:

- Reaction to the drugs used
- Post procedural chest infection, a high risk if you smoke
- Cardiac arrest
- Deep vein thrombosis

**Risks with the spinal cord Stimulator;**
Frequent risks

- Headache
- Problems with the cannula used to give antibiotics and fluid post procedure, either tissuing or blocking, requiring removing and re-siting.
- Infection in cannula site
- Migration or movement of the leads

Occasional risks

- Bleeding
- Development of new pain at implant site
- Failure to relieve the pain

Rare risks

- Collapse
- Haematoma formation due to excessive bleeding
- Allergic reaction to the implant
- Spinal cord injury leading to paralysis which could be either permanent or temporary
- Infection that could lead to meningitis
- System malfunction

What do I need to do on discharge?

You should go home and gradually increase your level of activity. It is advisable to have someone with you for the first few weeks after discharge home as you gradually build up your activity, DO NOT take up new or unaccustomed exercise. Avoid overdoing it too soon.

Remember correct posture at all times, avoid lifting heavy objects and twisting body round, always face the object that you require.

You will be asked to come back and see members of the pain team about three to four weeks following procedure to see how you are getting on, people from the implant companies may also get in touch with you, for some systems they are the first point of call should you have a problem with the systems function other problems contact the pain service.

If you do not participate in some form of exercise to improve your general fitness and well being, you may not feel any major benefit from this treatment. Please remember, this is only a form of symptom management, not a cure for your pain.
If you have to attend a physiotherapy department please inform them that you have a spinal cord stimulator as this may affect treatment options they can offer.

Once implanted with a Spinal cord stimulator you cannot have an MRI scan

Contact

Jane Southall/Candice Baker/Clare Allcock
Clinical Nurse Specialists in Pain Management
01384 456111 ext. 4735 connected to an answering Machine
Direct dial: 01384 244735
Bleep: 7066

After 5pm, weekends and Bank Holidays

Your G.P. or NHS Direct

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