

Sacral nerve stimulation (permanent implant): frequently-asked questions

When you wake up and the level of stimulation

When you wake up, the stimulator will be turned on. This will usually be the same day and you will also be given your own controller. This is set just below the level at which you can feel. The equipment implanted in permanent stimulation is much more sophisticated than your test stimulator so there is no need to keep checking that you can feel it. However, if you prefer, you can set it so that you can feel the stimulation all the time. You will have a control box which will allow you to switch the device on and off and alter the stimulation slightly if needed. For reassurance over the first couple of days you can check that it is on with your controller but this is not essential.

Level of Activity

Whilst the permanent lead is much more secure than the temporary lead, it is still possible for it to move, especially in the first six weeks while the scar tissue forms around the lead. To avoid dislodging the lead, you should limit your activity to low or moderate levels for about six weeks after implantation. For example, you should only fill the kettle up as much as you need to and avoid lifting anything heavier, i.e. wet washing, vacuum cleaner. Gentle walking is okay but avoid more vigorous exercise, weight training, sexual intercourse and driving. This is similar to when you had your temporary wire but remember once the body produces the scar tissue, you can get back to normal activity. You should eat and drink as normal and take medications as you normally would. If you usually take Imodium, it may be worth reducing or stopping this to see if you can manage without it as the stimulator can also alter bowel function. You will have two small wounds, one over your sacrum where the lead has been inserted, and one over your buttock where the neurostimulator (battery) has been implanted. Both should be kept dry and undisturbed for five days and then you can remove the dressing and leave the wounds uncovered. From then on you can take quick showers but should avoid soaking in a bath for at least a further week. If the wound becomes red, swollen or discharges (this may be an infection), you should contact your GP immediately. Because you have a metal implant, you will need to have antibiotics to treat the infection as soon as possible.

Precautions

When you move (especially bending/twisting), the wire may move slightly in relation to the sacral nerves and the level of stimulation may change so you could feel a sudden increase or decrease in the stimulation. This is normal but could feel uncomfortable and make you jerk suddenly. As such you must not drive for six weeks after having an implant put in, but then after that it should be okay. It is advisable to turn the device off when driving or operating machinery but remember to switch it back on. There is a possibility that when you go through a security screen in shops or airports you may set the alarm off. Also because you have a metal implant you may need to liaise with your doctor/radiologist if you are to have an MRI scan.

Who can I contact for more help or information?

Oncology Nurses

- Uro-Oncology Nurse Specialist
01223 586748
- Bladder cancer Nurse Practitioner (haematuria, chemotherapy & BCG)
01223 274608
- Prostate cancer Nurse Practitioner
01223 274608

Non-Oncology Nurses

- Urology Nurse Practitioner (incontinence, urodynamics, catheter patients)
01223 274608 or 586748

Patient Advice & Liaison Centre (PALS)

- Telephone
+44 (0)1223 216756 or 257257
+44 (0)1223 274432 or 274431
- PatientLine
*801 (*from patient bedside telephones only*)
- E mail
pals@addenbrookes.nhs.uk
- Mail
PALS, Box No 53
Addenbrooke's Hospital
Hills Road, Cambridge, CB2 2QQ

Chaplaincy and Multi-Faith Community

- Telephone
+44 (0)1223 217769
- E mail
derek.fraser@addenbrookes.nhs.uk
- Mail
The Chaplaincy, Box No 105
Addenbrooke's Hospital
Hills Road, Cambridge, CB2 2QQ

MINICOM System ("type" system for the hard of hearing)

- Telephone
+44 (0)1223 274604

Access Office (travel, parking & security information)

- Telephone
+44 (0)1223 586969

Other information

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Please ask if you require this information in other languages, large print or audio format: 01223 216032 or patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk

Polish Informacje te można otrzymać w innych językach, w wersji dużym drukiem lub audio. Zamówienia prosimy składać pod numerem: 01223 216032 lub wysyłając e-mail: patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk

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patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk

Bengali

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Document history

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