

Spinal Cord Stimulator Trial

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Introduction

A Spinal Cord Stimulator (SCS) is a device that is implanted under the skin. It has electrodes that are placed in the epidural space connected to a device that stimulates the spine at a higher frequency than your body's own pain nerve signals. By doing this the incoming pain nerve stimulus is filtered out and the pain signals are interrupted and reduced. The frequency and intensity of the impulses are controlled with an external programmer according to your body's needs. It is a safe and effective therapy to control/reduce your chronic pain and has been used for over 40 years. The goal of the spinal cord stimulator is to significantly reduce your pain so you can resume your daily activities, sleep better, and improve your general well being.

What to expect

It is important to determine whether Spinal Cord Stimulator therapy is beneficial for you before surgically implanting a permanent device.

The specific requirements are:

1. Failed conservative therapies in pain management.
2. Insurance prior authorization or pre certification.
3. Psychological assessment.
4. A successful spinal cord stimulator trial period.

Procedure

This is a multi-step process:

1. A **Spinal Cord Stimulator Trial** is performed prior to a permanent implant. The temporary trial leads are usually left in place 3-5 days.
2. You will need to fast (nothing by mouth) for six hours prior to the procedure. If you have any concerns about medications or fasting, please call the nurse line.
3. You will need a responsible adult driver that remains in the lobby during the procedure and to take you home afterwards.
4. For your safety, if you receive sedation, we strongly suggest a responsible adult stay with you over night.
5. The implant device representative will be in the room with your physician during the procedure.

****If you are on blood thinners they will need to be stopped prior to procedure according to the prescribing physician's instructions and remain off until after the leads are pulled and the trial period is completed.**

In the Room

1. The spinal core stimulator trial is a sterile procedure performed at the pain institute under fluoroscopy (xray) guidance.
2. IV sedation may be available during the procedure; your physician will determine this.
3. Blood pressure and pulse monitors are applied.
4. During the procedure, you will be placed on your stomach.
5. The area is cleansed with an antiseptic solution and sterile drapes are applied.
6. After a small area of your back is numbed, the pain specialist physician will use a special needle to feed the temporary leads into the epidural space. After the lead placement is confirmed, they are connected to an external neuro stimulator generator that will be worn around your waist area with a special belt.
7. During the procedure, you will be awake enough to provide feedback to questions asked by the physician or device representative. This allows the physician to obtain optimal results with the lead placement.

The neurostimulation is often felt as a tingling sensation or pulses in your back or limbs. These signals should help to reduce your pain sensations. The intensity and location of these impulses are adjusted and controlled with a programmer.

Please discuss the risks of this procedure with the physician.

After the Procedure

You will spend time in a recovery room where further adjustments are made with the programmer. You will be instructed on how to use this programmer before you are discharged. This will enable you to turn on/off, increase/decrease intensity of impulses, and change programming to experience different sensations.

For the Trial Period

- Keep the area clean and dry
- Avoid strenuous activity such as lifting >5lbs, twisting, bending, climbing, and driving.
- Keep a log of level of pain related to activities of daily living during the trial period.
- Follow up discharge instructions will be given to you.
- **It is important that you do not resume your blood thinners until after the leads are pulled.**

Your pain physician and the device representative are available as resources in helping you manage your spinal cord stimulator during your trial period.

You will return in three to five days, (after the trial period is completed) to have the leads removed, evaluate the results, and discuss options with your pain specialist physician.