

**Leeds Pain and Interventional  
Neuromodulation Service**

**Discharge advice following  
implantation of a trial of a  
Spinal Cord Stimulator (Internal  
lead and external battery)**

Information for patients



**Leeds Centre for  
Neurosciences**

This leaflet is for patients who have had a trial of a Spinal Cord Stimulator and gives post operative information and advice.

**It is very important that you are aware of wound care and post operative advice and follow up before being discharged. Please check with the nursing staff and read this information leaflet.**

## **Mobilising**

You may gently mobilise on the ward as soon as you feel able to. If you have had any sedation in theatre or require any assistance, please ask a member of the ward staff to assist you before you attempt to get out of bed.

Once you are home please begin to gently mobilise as much as you are able to. It is difficult to assess whether the stimulator is of any benefit unless you take part in your usual daily activities. However, please take care not to over exert yourself.

Please avoid sitting or standing for long periods. To reduce the risk of your lead moving, it is very important you avoid any heavy lifting, bending, twisting or stretching during your trial. Do not lift your arms above your head.

**Please do not drive during the trial period of your Spinal Cord Stimulator.**

## Trial of a Spinal Cord Stimulator

You will have an internal lead (s) (going into your back) attached to an external battery pack. This pack can either be strapped to your waist using the belt you have been given or may be under a dressing on your back. Please try to ensure the wire, cable and battery pack do not catch on anything when you are moving.

If your battery pack is beeping make sure that the leads are still connected to the battery pack but do not remove any dressings in order to do this. If you are unsure of what to do or if the beeping continues, please ring the Pain Nurses.

If your trial box is under a dressing you will not have to change the batteries. However, if your battery pack is on a belt, you may need to do so, please use the batteries supplied if you need to do so.

If you have any questions about your stimulator, please refer to your patient handbook or call the Pain Nurses.

## Hygiene during a trial

During your trial, please do not take a bath or have a shower.

**A daily strip wash is okay but it is very important that your lead, external battery and dressings do not get wet.**

## Wound Care

If you have a trial please do not remove the dressing for any reason. If your dressing begins to come loose and you have been given spare dressings, please place them over where the dressing is loose.

There is a risk of infection if your dressing becomes loose or comes off, please ring the Pain Nurses straight away and get seen that same day. If you have been unable to speak to a pain nurse, please get seen at your GP Practice but this should just be to secure the dressing and check the lead site (not to remove the dressing). If you are seen at your GP Practice, please also let the Pain Nurses know.

Please monitor your wounds for signs of infection, it may be easier to ask someone to do this for you. Signs of infection include redness or swelling around your wounds and fluid or pus leaking. If you notice any of these signs or feel unwell with a high temperature or flu like symptoms, please call the Pain Nurses. **You will need to be seen on the same day so if it is out of hours (not between 8.00 - 16.00 Monday - Friday) or you have been unable to speak to a Pain Nurse, you need to contact your Out of Hours GP or go to A&E if unwell.** Please ensure you also contact the Pain Nurses to let them know.

You may see a small amount of blood around your wound site, however, if the bleeding is more than a small amount or is leaking through your dressing, you need to be seen on the same day, please call the Pain Nurses or out of hours contact your GP or A&E. Again, please ensure you also contact the Pain Nurses to let them know.

It is normal to feel some soreness and discomfort around your wound site after. Please discuss this with your GP if you feel you are in significant pain that is not managed.

**If you have any new weakness in both your legs or your arms, if you lose the ability to lift and weight bear or if you have any bowel or bladder incontinence, go to A&E immediately.**

## Medication

If you have stopped taking Warfarin, Clopidogrel or Aspirin or any medication that affects the clotting of your blood prior to surgery please follow advice from the Team, usually this should not be restarted until the end of the trial but always check first. Always ensure you tell the Pain Nurses at your follow up that you take this medication.

Do not make any other changes to your pain medication without advice from either the Pain Nurses or your GP. This will be reviewed when you see the Nurses at your follow up appointments but you can always discuss this with your GP.

## Pain Diary

Please keep a daily pain diary, noting your pain scores when sitting, standing and walking on each of your program.

## Patient Pathway and follow up

Your follow up appointments will normally be with the Pain Nurses in Leeds. Please check your letter for date, time and location. You will normally be seen by the Pain Nurses 10-14 days after the trial lead has been implanted. Your trial may then be ended at this appointment (lead removed) or may be extended for a little longer (the Nurses will discuss this with you).

Occasionally the trial will be a permanent lead and the internal battery is then implanted within a couple of weeks. However, this is more unusual, normally the trial will be ended and then if successful, you will then be added back onto the waiting list for the full Spinal Cord Stimulator implant (internal lead and battery) but the nurses will discuss this with you at your appointment.

Please remember to bring your pain diary and patient handset with you to each appointment. You will also be asked to complete a pain questionnaire every time you attend an appointment with the Pain Nurses.

## Contact us

- **For any queries Monday to Friday between 08.00 - 16.00**  
Please call **0113 392 2178** and leave a message for the Pain Nurses with **your name** and **NHS number**.

We will try to get back to you the same day but cannot guarantee this.

- **At other times please call your GP, 111 or go to A&E (for anything more urgent).** If you do have any problems out of hours please always let the Pain Nurses know as well.

# Questions / Notes

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## What did you think of your care?

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***Your views matter***



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