

What Do I Do During the Evaluation Period?

- ◇ Take your antibiotics as prescribed.
- ◇ Resume your normal diet.
- ◇ Have a responsible adult stay with you for at least 24 hours.
- ◇ You may experience some drowsiness, light headedness or mild nausea. Stand and move with caution if you do have light headedness.
- ◇ Resume usual activities the following day; especially those activities that cause familiar pain.
- ◇ Use caution when changing positions. Move without twisting by moving your shoulder and hip at the same time.
- ◇ **DO NOT** drive or operate equipment for 24 hours.
- ◇ **DO NOT** drive with the system on.
- ◇ **DO NOT** reach, bend, stretch, twist or lift more than 5 lbs.
- ◇ **DO NOT** disconnect the trial cable from the leads.

Site Care

- ◇ **DO NOT REMOVE THE DRESSING.** Keep the dressing clean and dry. You may reinforce the dressing with medical tape if it comes loose.
- ◇ **DO NOT SHOWER OR TUB BATHE,** you may sponge bathe.
- ◇ **DO NOT** pull on or become entangled in the cable.

During the Evaluation you Will be Asked to Keep a Diary. You May be Asked:

- ◇ To log the number of hours you used it.
- ◇ What setting worked the best or was used the most?
- ◇ Did you sleep better?
- ◇ Were you able to perform activities that you couldn't perform before?
- ◇ Were you able to decrease your pain medications?

Please Call the Office Immediately for any of the Following Symptoms:

- ◇ The trial leads pull out.
- ◇ Fever of 101 or higher.
- ◇ Excessive bleeding, redness, swelling, or foul odor at the surgical site.
- ◇ An increase in pain at the surgical site.



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Spinal Cord & DRG Stimulator Trial



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Feel Better...Live Better

What is a Spinal Cord Stimulator?

A spinal cord stimulator (SCS) is a small device placed surgically under your skin. A thin wire carries electrical impulses from a programmable pulse generator to the nerve fibers of the spinal cord. The SCS can be turned on or off. The SCS stimulates the nerves in the area where your pain is felt. Pain is reduced because the electrical impulses modify and mask the pain signal from reaching your brain. Stimulation does not eliminate the source of pain, it simply interferes with the signal to the brain. The amount of pain relief varies for each person.

What is the Purpose of a Spinal Cord Stimulator?

The SCS generates an electric field to modify nerve conduction of pain signals to the brain. Some SCS devices use a low-frequency current to replace the pain sensation with a mild tingling feeling called paresthesia. Other SCS devices use high-frequency or burst pulses to mask the pain with no tingling feeling.

What is DRG stimulation?

The Dorsal Root Ganglion (DRG) stimulation *process* follows the same steps as explained in this pamphlet for SCS. The only differences are; the placement of the lead and the level of anesthesia given. DRG placement is done under monitored anesthesia care (MAC). DRG leads are placed directly over the dorsal root ganglion, where the large nerves from your legs enter the spinal canal. At this time DRG stimulation is FDA approved for lower extremity Complex Regional Pain Syndrome and Phantom Limb Syndrome with pain.

Who is a Candidate?

Patients with chronic and severe neuropathic pain, who have not responded to other more conservative treatments. Neuropathic pain is pain due to damaged nerve tissue. Common examples include patients with lower back pain from failed back surgery, leg or arm pain also referred to as radiculopathy, diabetic neuropathy, and complex regional pain syndrome.

Stimulation does not work for everyone. Some patients may find the sensation unpleasant. In other cases it may not cover the entire pain area. For these reasons a TRIAL of STIMULATION is performed **before** the device is permanently implanted.

How do I get a Stimulator?

Once it is determined you are a candidate and you are interested in moving forward with a trial, we will request authorization from your insurance company. Not all insurances will cover the procedure. Prior to the trial, you will have a psychological evaluation to help determine if you are a good candidate for spinal cord or DRG stimulation. Insurance companies require this before you can have the trial. Some patients can decide right away if this therapy works for them and others may need more time to decide. If you are on blood thinners or take any medications that may affect your blood's ability to clot, you will be given specific instructions on when to hold these medications.

Why do I need a psychological evaluation?

A psychological evaluation is a mandatory part of the process of attaining a SCS and is required for every patient by all insurance companies. It is a simple two-step process. The first portion of the evaluation is done in the office. You will complete a series of questions about yourself. For the second part, you will meet with our Psychologist in the office. This is a separate appointment and only conducted at our office in DeWitt.

How long will the psychological evaluation take?

The actual appointment for evaluation takes about half an hour.

Is it hard to complete the psychological evaluation?

Nearly everyone who undergoes this process is cleared to receive the SCS, so it is nothing to be worried about.

What is the goal of the psychological evaluation?

The goal of the evaluation is to better assess your mood and coping, as chronic pain often leads to increases in depression and anxiety symptoms. These are not necessarily reasons that you will not be approved.

The evaluation will also assess your understanding of the SCS process; for this reason, it is important to speak with the SCS representative prior to the psychological evaluation.

The Trial

The procedure takes place at a surgery center. To ensure proper placement of the wires you may be mildly sedated. You will be conscious, although some patients may not remember parts of the procedure.

You must bring the prescribed antibiotics with you the day of the procedure.

The trial uses a temporary spinal cord stimulator system. The external generator is connected to insulated thin wires that are placed into the epidural space of your spine to deliver the electrical impulses. The trial period is typically 7 to 10 days. This gives you an opportunity to experience spinal cord stimulation and evaluate the benefit without having to undergo a full implantation.

If your pain is involving the low back and legs the electrodes are inserted in the midline (along the spine) of the mid back, usually above any previous surgery. If your pain is involving the arm, the electrodes are inserted midline of the neck. Once the wires are in position the doctor will connect them to a small external generator that will be worn outside the body. You will be taken to the recovery room, where further programming of the external generator will take place. DRG leads go into the low back next to the nerves that correlate with your leg pain.

Prior to releasing you home, the staff will review your discharge instructions. You will be discharged home with these instructions.