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Spinal Cord Stimulation: A Proven Therapy for Pain

If you have been living with chronic pain, spinal cord stimulation (SCS) may provide new hope. Spinal cord stimulation has been identified to be an effective treatment option for many chronic pain sufferers.¹

Spinal cord stimulation is a medical therapy for people who suffer from certain types of chronic pain. SCS uses a small implanted device to generate tiny electrical pulses that replace the feeling of pain with a tingling or massaging sensation.

Spinal cord stimulation is a widely accepted medical treatment. It is an FDA-approved therapy for treatment of chronic pain of the trunk and limbs (back, legs and arms). Many major health insurance plans, Medicare and worker's compensation programs provide benefits and coverage for SCS therapy.

Each year as many as 50,000 neurostimulators are implanted worldwide.² A study of chronic pain sufferers who used ANS neurostimulators³ revealed the following:

- 84% reported that their quality of life was improved or greatly improved
- 77% had good or excellent pain relief
- 82% decreased their use of pain medications

SCS is not a cure for pain. The objective with this therapy is to reduce your pain to a manageable level.

Why Choose SCS?

Spinal cord stimulation has three significant advantages:

1. It can be very effective in relieving certain types of pain in the back, legs and arms.
2. You can try SCS before you have a permanent system placed in your body, so you'll know if the therapy will work for you.

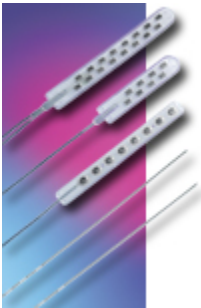


3. The system can be turned off permanently or removed if you don't get the level of relief you desire.

How Spinal Cord Stimulation Works

For spinal cord stimulation (SCS) to control your pain, you must have a small system placed in your body. An SCS system looks and works a lot like a pacemaker. In fact, SCS systems are sometimes called “pacemakers for pain.” An SCS system generates mild electrical pulses and sends them to your spinal cord. These electrical pulses replace the feeling of pain with a tingling or massaging sensation.

To understand how spinal cord stimulation (SCS) works, it is helpful to understand the components of a spinal cord stimulation system. SCS systems typically consist of three components designed to work together:



Leads—Very thin cables that deliver electrical pulses to nerves along your spinal cord.



Generator—Small device that holds the electronic components and sends the electrical current through the lead.



Controller—“Remote control” that lets you adjust the strength and/or location of the electrical pulses that are pre-programmed.

About the SCS Procedure

Spinal cord stimulation (SCS) surgery is most commonly performed in two separate steps—a trial procedure and a permanent implant.



The Trial Procedure

The stimulation trial usually requires a short procedure. This procedure is often performed on an outpatient basis at a hospital, pain clinic, or at a day surgery center. The trial implantation may be performed under light sedation or, less frequently, under general anesthesia. Often, all that is needed is a local anesthetic to numb the area where the leads are inserted.

During the procedure, one or more leads are placed in the space along the spinal cord. The leads are typically inserted using a needle. The exact placement depends upon the location of your pain. When the leads are positioned in the best location, they are connected to a portable, external generator. Once connected, the system generates mild electrical pulses that will be programmed to replace your areas of intense pain with a more pleasant sensation known as paresthesia.

Your doctor determines the length of the trial period. It may last for only a few days or several weeks. A longer trial may allow you to test how well you respond to stimulation throughout the day while a shorter trial can be appropriate if your response is immediate and pain relief is dramatic.

During the Trial Period

When you get home, you will be able to test how well the stimulation helps control your pain throughout the day and during different activities. You will jot down notes in your trial diary to track which program(s) you use and how the stimulation covers your pain. Several days or more after the procedure, you will either return to your doctor's office for a follow-up visit or a member of the doctor's staff will call you to see how you are doing.

If your trial is successful and you and your doctor decide to go forward with a permanent SCS system, it can be the beginning of an exciting time in your life. With SCS, you may be able to do more of the things you really want to do. And it may be a major step toward a healthier, more active and fulfilling lifestyle.

The Permanent Procedure

If the spinal cord stimulation (SCS) trial provides enough pain relief, you will probably be scheduled to have the permanent system placed. Remember, even though an SCS system is called permanent, spinal cord stimulation is a reversible therapy. If you want to discontinue treatment at any time, the implanted parts can be turned off or removed.

Similar to the trial, the permanent implantation requires a relatively short surgical procedure. Although procedure times vary, typical times range from one to two hours. This procedure, like the trial procedure, is often performed on an outpatient basis or at a day surgery center. The procedure may be performed under light sedation or general anesthesia. Your doctor will select the appropriate type of anesthesia for you.

The generator will be placed in the area of the body that you and your doctor have agreed upon. Leads will be placed along the spinal cord and attached to a generator. Bandages will be applied.