

What is the purpose of Spinal Cord Stimulator?

Spinal Cord Stimulation is a treatment option for patients suffering from Complex Regional Pain Syndromes (CRPS) also know as Reflex Sympathetic Dystrophy (RSD), nerve damage (neuropathic pain), failed back surgery pain, spinal cord damage, phantom limb pain, and pain caused by blood vessel disease. It is not a "first line" treatment and is performed after more conservative therapies have failed.

The Spinal cord stimulator electrically stimulates the spinal cord with a low voltage impulse that blocks the sensation of pain. Electrical stimulation is delivered through an implanted lead near the spinal cord in the epidural space. The lead is connected to an implanted long life battery or a receiver that receives energy from an external battery.

The procedure is done in two stages at different times. In the trial stage, temporary wires are placed and an external device is used by the patients to generate electrical stimulation. This is really a test to determine if a permanent spinal cord stimulator should be used. If this trial is successful in relieving your pain, then the permanent device is placed under the skin, usually about two weeks later.

Spinal Cord Stimulator



Ramesh P. Kanuru M.D.

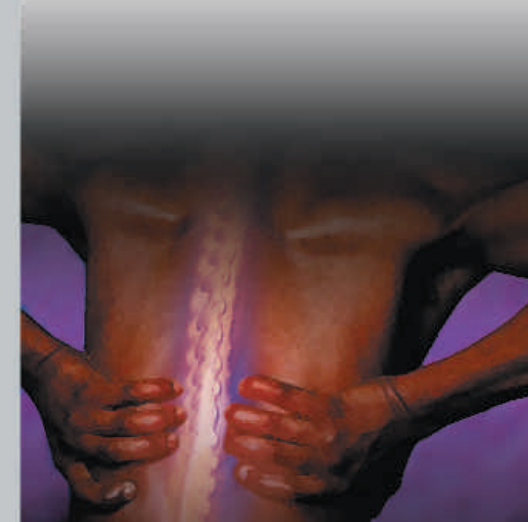
William A. Dodson M.D.

Tel: 219-838-1100 or Toll Free: 866-656-1100

Everything you need to know about...

Spinal Cord Stimulator The Trial Implant

An important part of helping you manage your pain is for you to have clear understanding about your treatment. This pamphlet contains important information on the Spinal Cord Stimulator, which we hope, will be of use to you.



Compassionate care for your worst pain.

What does the procedure involve?

The spinal cord stimulation trial implant is usually an outpatient procedure performed in the Operating Room under strict sterile conditions. When brought to the Operating Room, you will be connected to monitoring equipment (EKG monitor, blood pressure cuff, and a blood-oxygen monitoring device). The doctor or nurse will start an intravenous line and give some medicine to help you relax. You may also receive an antibiotic. The procedure is performed with you lying on your stomach.

The doctor will cleanse your back with antiseptic solution and inject some numbing medicine. You may feel a burning sensation for a few seconds. With the assistance of a special X-ray machine called a fluoroscope, the doctor will place a needle through the skin next to the nerves to be stimulated. When the needle is in the correct position, the doctor will advance the spinal cord stimulating wires through the needle, connect them to a special battery, and begin stimulating the nerve with electrical impulses. You will probably sense a tingling sensation in the area of your usual pain, which means the electrical impulses are going to the right place. The electrical current coming from the battery will be adjusted until the sensation is no longer unpleasant.

After the procedure, we ask that you remain at the Clinic until the doctor feels you are ready to leave.

Can I go to sleep for the procedure?

Since you need to talk to the doctor and tell him the type of sensation you are experiencing, you will not be put to sleep. However, you will receive enough medication to keep you comfortable.

How long will the procedure take?

Normally, the spinal cord stimulator trial implant will take one hour or longer.

What should I do before the procedure?

Do not eat or drink anything after midnight the day before the procedure. If you are on medications, you may take them with sips of water. If you are a diabetic, discuss your medication with your doctor.

You may need to stop taking certain medications several days before the procedure. Please remind the doctor of all prescription and over-the-counter medications you take, including herbal and vitamin supplements. The doctor will tell you if and when you need to discontinue the medications.

Tell the doctor if you develop a cold, fever, or flu symptoms before your scheduled appointment.

Is there anything special that I need to do after the procedure?

The purpose of the trial placement is to determine how much pain relief can

be achieved and if you can increase your level of physical activity. Do not expect to be completely pain free.

Keep the area clean and dry to help prevent skin infection.

Try to do your normal activities so we can determine to what extent you can increase your level of function.

You may experience some muscle discomfort where the needles were placed. This may be treated with a mild pain reliever such as Tylenol.

Do not drive for the remainder of the day. Please have an adult drive you home or accompany you in a taxi or other public transportation.

Depending on how you feel, you may resume normal activities and return to work in one to three days.

What are the risks of a Spinal Cord Stimulator Trial?

The risks are minimal but potentially include: *Infection, spinal cord compression, meningitis, spinal fluid leak, bleeding, movement of the wires, and hardware failure.*

Please call the doctor right away if you experience any redness or swelling in the area of the sutures, fever, chills, an alteration of the stimulation pattern, movement of the electrical signal, or failure of the battery.