



IMPLANTATION OF A PERMANENT FACIAL NERVE STIMULATOR

YOUR SURGERY

You tried out a facial nerve stimulator in an effort to reduce your chronic facial pain. Since the treatment was successful, you were offered the option of having an electrode connected to a permanent internal neurostimulator permanently implanted.

The procedure, which is performed while you are under general anaesthesia, consists of implanting electrodes in your face and an internal neurostimulator.

The life of the neurostimulator's battery varies from three to five years. Some models of neurostimulators require weekly recharging, which you would do at home. You will be informed if that is your case.

AT THE HOSPITAL

You will be given a temporary identification card for your neurostimulator at the hospital. The official manufacturer's card will be mailed to you a few weeks later. Keep this card with you at all times, along with your health-insurance card.

ONCE BACK HOME

WOUNDS

- Remove your dressings 48 hours after your procedure, according to your doctor's instructions.
- Leave your wound open to the air if there is no discharge.
- Make an appointment at your local CLSC to remove your stitches or staples. They should usually be removed 10 to 14 days after your surgery. Bring your prescription to have your stitches or staples removed with you when you come in for your appointment at the CLSC. It will be given to you at the hospital.
- It will take several weeks for the surgical wounds to heal properly. You may experience discomfort at the site your incisions as well as pain near where the neurostimulator and electrode are implanted. This is normal; it might take up to eight weeks after your surgery for the pain to disappear. Take your pain medication as recommended by your specialist.

HYGIENE

- Do not shower or bathe while you have one or more dressings. You can wash yourself with a washcloth at the sink.
- Keep your dressings clean and dry at all times.
- Do not rub your wounds.
- Rinse your wounds if they have been in contact with soap.
- Wait 7 days after the stitches or staples have been removed before taking a bath or swimming (pool, spa, lake, etc.).

MEDICATION

- Be sure to take the prescribed medication as instructed by your specialist.

HEALTH-CARE PROFESSIONALS (DOCTOR, DENTIST, ETC.)

- Tell them that you have a permanent internal neurostimulator. Show them your neurostimulator identification card.
- Some tests or treatments can interfere with or damage your neurostimulator (e.g., medical magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), radiotherapy, ultrasound, lasers, TENS, radiofrequencies, or electrocautery). Check with your health-care provider first to make sure that you can safely undergo the examination.
- Diathermy—that is, treatment with electromagnetic waves or electric currents—is contraindicated (risk of burns and permanent damage).
- If you have to undergo an emergency examination, you can ask your health-care professional (doctor, nurse, technician, etc.) to contact the neuromodulation specialist or the manufacturer of your neurostimulator to find out what precautions to take with your type of device.

EXERTION AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

- Your specialist might recommend that you restrict some of your activities once your neurostimulator has been implanted.
- Avoid lifting objects weighing more than 2.25 kg (children, grocery bags, etc.).
- Avoid twisting, extending, rotating, or stretching your neck and head for at least 4 weeks.

Afterwards, you can carefully do these movements but gradually.

Any sudden or repetitive movements of the area where the neurostimulator and electrode have been implanted (neck, face, and head) are not recommended after an internal neurostimulator has been implanted since it might damage the device.

Physical exercise and certain activities should be done with caution.

DRIVING

- The manufacturer recommends that you turn off your neurostimulator while driving, but you can leave it on if you are a passenger.

AIR TRAVEL

- Turn your neurostimulator off. Put your remote control in your carry-on bag when you arrive at the airport.
- When boarding an airplane, show your neurostimulator identification card to security officials. Tell them that you cannot go through the security gate, since that might damage your device or affect the stimulation. You must therefore request a physical search.
- If the security officer uses a metal detector, they must avoid passing it over the insertion site of the various neurostimulator components (face and subclavian region).

ANTI-THEFT DEVICES (IN LIBRARIES, SHOPS, ETC.)

- Turn your neurostimulator off whenever you go through such devices. Move to the center of the device and walk normally.
- Stay as far away from the walls of the device as possible and do not linger near them.
- Once you have gone through, turn your neurostimulator back on.

HOME APPLIANCES AND MAGNETIC FIELDS

- You can use your household or office appliances (microwave oven, lawnmower, computer, etc.) as long as they are in good condition.
- Avoid putting your neurostimulator in direct contact with these devices (e.g., by putting your electronic tablet on your neurostimulator).
- Some types of equipment emit a strong magnetic field. They can affect your neurostimulator (e.g., a power plant).
- If you experience any unusual discomfort or uneasiness around any device or piece of equipment, move away and turn off your neurostimulator.

CELL PHONES

- The manufacturer recommends that you wear your cell phone on the side opposite your neurostimulator.

NEUROMODULATION SYSTEM AND REMOTE CONTROL

- Do not move or rub your neurostimulation system through your skin. That can damage it, move it, or irritate your skin.
- The device's remote control must not be placed on other devices (e.g., a pacemaker) because this could cause an accidental change in programming.
- Check the batteries of your remote control regularly (icon on the remote-control screen). If necessary, recharge your remote control or replace the batteries with good-quality, non-rechargeable ones.
- Reduce, adjust, or stop the stimulation before changing position (e.g., from sitting to lying down).
- If the stimulation becomes unpleasant or if you do not feel it in the right place despite your attempts to adjust it, turn your neurostimulator off and make an appointment at the neuromodulation clinic.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS TO WATCH FOR

Consult a doctor if you have the following symptoms:

- Changes to your surgical wound: redness, pain, heat, swelling, opening of the wound despite sutures, foul odour, or purulent discharge from a dressing.
- Chills and fever (over 38.5 °C or 101.3 °F).
- Increased or unusual pain at the surgical site.
- Persistent headache.

ANY QUESTIONS?

In the case of emergencies, go to the Fleurimont Hospital emergency room. If your health status does not permit you to go there, go to the nearest hospital emergency room.

NEUROMODULATION CLINIC

Monday to Friday, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.
819-346-1110, ext. 13954

CLSC IN YOUR AREA OR INFO-SANTÉ 811

Evenings, nights, and weekends

MEDTRONIC CUSTOMER SERVICE

1-888-660-4616 or medtronic.com

It is important to keep your appointments at the neuromodulation clinic, following the recommendations of your specialist. This allows you to ensure that your device is working properly and to monitor the condition of your battery. If you need to cancel your appointment, please notify the staff at the appointment centre at 819-564-5210.

REFERENCES

ON THE WEB:

INESSS (inesss.qc.ca)

Traitement de la douleur chronique non cancéreuse, neurostimulateurs médullaires et pompes intrathécales, June 2013

MEDTRONIC (MEDTRONIC.COM)

Patient information about neurostimulation, 2009, or <https://www.medtronic.com/ca-fr/votresante/traitements-therapies/pompe-a-medicamentdouleur-chronique/neurostimulateurs-qu-est-quec-est.html>

Author

Melanie Gilbert, clinical nurse Neuromodulation department, CIUSSS de l'Estrie – CHUS

Approbation

Department of neurosurgery

Revision and Layout

Service des communications

Direction des ressources humaines, des communications et des affaires juridiques

© Centre intégré universitaire de santé et de services sociaux de l'Estrie - Centre hospitalier universitaire de Sherbrooke, 2021

santeestrie.qc.ca

November 2021 - 4-6-11186 (French version) | 4-6-11187 (English version)