



# IMPLANTED NEUROSTIMULATOR

## YOUR SURGERY

To reduce pain, your medical expert has implanted an electrode probe on your spinal cord. Next, while you are under general anesthesia, an internal neurostimulator will be implanted. The lifetime of the device is approximately 3 to 5 years.

## AT THE HOSPITAL

You will be given a temporary ID card for your neurostimulator at the hospital. The official manufacturer's card will be mailed to your address in the upcoming weeks. Keep this card with you at all times along with your medical insurance card.

## ONCE YOU ARE BACK HOME

### Incisions

- Remove your dressing 48 hours after your surgery as instructed by your physician.
- If there is no discharge from your incision, leave it exposed to air.
- Schedule an appointment with your local CLSC to have your stitches or staples removed. You should normally remove them 10 to 14 days after your surgery. Bring the prescription to have your stitches or staples removed to your appointment at the CLSC. The prescription will be given to you at the hospital.
- It takes many weeks for the wounds to heal properly. You may experience discomfort at the incision sites as well as pain near the neurostimulator and electrode probe implantation site. Discomfort and pain are perfectly normal: it may take up to 8 weeks following your surgery for pain to recede. Take analgesics as recommended by your medical expert.

### Hygiene

- Do not shower or bathe while you have one or more bandages. You may wash at the sink using a facecloth.
- Keep your dressing dry and clean at all times.
- Do not scrub your wounds.
- Rinse your wounds if they have been in contact with soap.
- Wait for 7 days after the removal of your stitches or staples to shower or swim (pool, spa, lake, etc.).

### Medication

- Make sure you take your prescribed medication as recommended by your medical expert.

### Health care professionals (physicians, dentists, etc.)

- Notify your health care professionals that you have a permanent neurostimulator. Show them your spinal cord stimulator ID card.

Certain types of examinations or treatments can disrupt or damage your neurostimulator (e.g., MRI, X-rays, ultrasounds, lasers, TENS, radiofrequency, electrocautery, etc.). You must first confirm with your health care professional that you can take the examination.

Diathermy, a treatment with electromagnetic waves or electrical current, is contraindicated (risk of burns and permanent damage).

If you require an urgent examination, ask your health care professional (physician, nurse, technician, etc.) to contact your neuromodulation medical expert or your neurostimulator manufacturer to find out which precautions need to be taken with your device model.

## IMPORTANT

You must show up at your scheduled appointment or notify staff if you need to cancel it.

## Physical effort and activities

- Once your neurostimulator is implanted, your medical expert may recommend that you limit some of your activities.
- Avoid lifting objects weighing more than 2.25 kg (children, groceries, etc.).
- Avoid bending forward or backwards or making flexing, stretching, rotating or reaching movements for at least 8 weeks.

After this period, you may gradually start doing these movements again, exercising caution.

All abrupt and repetitive movements are not recommended once the neurostimulator is implanted. Repeatedly bending forward or backwards, turning sideways, jumping or stretching can cause the probe to move or break.

Take precautions before physical exercise and certain activities.

More information regarding physical effort and activities is contained in your device manufacturer's information guide (provided at your first visit prior to your surgery or the manufacturer's website, the address can be found in the references section of this leaflet).

## While driving

- The manufacturer recommends to switch your neurostimulator OFF when driving. You can leave your device activated when you are a passenger.

## While riding on a plane

- Switch your neurostimulator OFF. Put your remote control in your carry-on bag upon arriving at the airport.
- To board the plane, show your neurostimulator ID card to the security officers. Inform them that you cannot go through the airport security scan as doing so could damage your device or affect its performance. You must request a manual search (pat-down).
- If a security officer uses a wand metal detector, he must avoid waving it over the insertion site of the various neurostimulator components (back, side, abdomen).

## Antitheft or antishopping devices (in libraries, stores, etc.)

- Before passing through such devices, switch your neurostimulator OFF. Walk normally through the middle of the device.

Remain as far as possible from the sides of the detector and do not remain within proximity of the device.

Once you have passed through the device, switch your neurostimulator back ON.

## Home devices and magnetic fields

- You can use your home or office devices (microwave oven, lawnmower, computer, etc.) provided they are in good condition.

Avoid direct contact between your neurostimulator and other devices (e.g., putting your tablet against your neurostimulator).

Some types of equipment emit a strong electromagnetic field which can affect your neurostimulator (e.g., power plant).

If you experience any unusual discomfort when approaching a device or equipment, move away and switch your neurostimulator OFF.

## Cell phones

- The manufacturer recommends to carry your cell phone on the side opposite to your neurostimulator.

## Neuromodulation system and remote control

- Do not manipulate or scrub your neurostimulator through your skin. You could damage it, displace it or irritate your skin.

The device remote control should not be placed on top of other devices (e.g., pacemaker, etc.). Doing so could accidentally modify its programming.

- Regularly check remote control batteries (icon on remote control screen). When required, replace with good-quality, non-rechargeable batteries.
- Lower or cease stimulation before changing position (e.g., from sitting to lying down).

Stimulation can be raised or lowered after changing position. Readjust the stimulation for comfort as soon as you have finished changing positions (see "Neurostimulation Trial" for further explanations).

If the stimulation becomes uncomfortable or is not felt at the correct site, switch your neurostimulator OFF and schedule an appointment at the neuromodulation clinic.

**It is important that you keep your appointments at the neuromodulation clinic and comply with the recommendations of your medical expert.**

**Doing so will assure that your device is working properly and help you to monitor the device battery status.**

## SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS YOU NEED TO MONITOR

Consult a physician if you have the following symptoms:

- Any changes to your surgical wound: redness, warmth, swelling, opening of the wound despite stitches, foul odour or discharge on the bandage;
- Chills and fever (above 38.5°C or 101.3°F);
- Dizziness or loss of consciousness;
- Intense or unusual pain.
- Constant headache.
- Weakness in an arm or leg that wasn't there before.

## DO YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS?

For any type of emergency, please go to the emergency department of Hôpital Fleurimont. If your health status does not permit you to go there, then go to your nearest hospital emergency department.

### Neuromodulation clinic

Monday to Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.  
819-346-1110, ext. 13954

### Your local CLSC or Info-Santé 811

Evenings, nights and week-ends

### Medtronic customer service

1-888-660-4616 or medtronic.com

## REFERENCES

Online:

### INESSS (inesss.qc.ca)

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

### Medtronic (medtronic.com)

Patient information regarding neurostimulation (2009), or <https://www.medtronic.com/ca-en/your-health/treatments-therapies/drug-pump-chronic-pain/neurostimulators-what-is-it.html>

### Author

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### Revision and layout

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de Sherbrooke

Québec 

## CHECKLIST

My examination date: \_\_\_\_\_

If you need to cancel your appointment, please notify the staff by dialling 819-346-1110, ext. 13954.

Location; Hôpital Fleurimont

3001, 12<sup>e</sup> Avenue Nord