

# TENS machine

## Pain Management Patient Information Leaflet

### Introduction

This leaflet is about transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation (TENS). It gives information on what it is used for, how to use a TENS machine and the risks of using one.

### What is a TENS machine?

Transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation (TENS) is a method of pain relief involving the use of a mild electrical current.

A TENS machine is a small, battery-operated device that has leads connected to sticky pads called electrodes. You attach the pads directly to your skin. When the machine is switched on, small electrical impulses are delivered to the affected area of your body, which you feel as a tingling sensation.

The electrical impulses can reduce the pain signals going to the spinal cord and brain, which may help relieve pain and relax muscles. They may also stimulate the production of endorphins, which are the body's natural painkillers. It helps to reduce pain and muscle spasms caused by a variety of conditions.

# What are the benefits of a TENS machine?

It can help with:

- Arthritic pain
- Widespread pain conditions
- Neck pain
- Back pain
- Knee pain
- Muscular pain

The treatment is generally very safe. It can be used instead of, or in addition to, the treatments you are currently receiving. TENS machines are portable.

## Does TENS work?

TENS is not a cure for your pain but it can give you short-term relief whilst the machine is on. It needs to be used for a minimum of two hours at a time but can be used as little or as often as you require.

## What are the risks?

For most people, TENS is a safe treatment with no risks or side effects.

Some people may be allergic to the pads and their skin may become red and irritated.

### **Do not use it without first seeking medical advice if:**

- You have a pacemaker or another type of electrical or metal implant in your body.
- You are pregnant, or there is a chance you might be pregnant – TENS may not be recommended early in pregnancy.
- You have epilepsy or a heart problem.

## How do I use a TENS machine?

We will book you into a TENS clinic with a nurse who will go through how to use the machine. We will also provide you with the manufacturer's instructions and give you advice on pad placement.

TENS machines are small and lightweight, so you can use them while you are on the move. You can put it in your pocket, clip it to your belt or hold it in your hand.

You can use TENS throughout the day for as long as you like, although it should not be used while you are driving, operating machinery, or in the bath or shower.

## Does it hurt when the machine is on?

No, it should not be painful. You will feel a slight tingling sensation pass through your skin when the machine is on. You start on a low setting and gradually increase it until the sensation feels strong but comfortable. If the tingling sensation starts to feel painful or uncomfortable, reduce it slightly.

## Can I find out more?

You can find out more from the following website:

### **NHS Choices**

[TENS machines](#)

If you have any questions, or if there is anything you do not understand about this leaflet, please contact:

Clinical nurse specialists on the Pain Management helpline:  
01384 244735 (9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday)

Russells Hall Hospital switchboard number: 01384 456111

**This leaflet can be downloaded or printed from:**

<http://dgft.nhs.uk/services-and-wards/pain-management/patient-information-leaflets/>

If you have any feedback on this patient information leaflet, please email [dgft.patient.information@nhs.net](mailto:dgft.patient.information@nhs.net)

**This leaflet can be made available in large print, audio version and in other languages, please call 0800 073 0510.**

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此宣传单可提供大字版本、音频版本和其它语言版本，请拨打电话：0800 073 0510。

Ulotka dostępna jest również w dużym druku, wersji audio lub w innym języku. W tym celu zadzwoń pod numer 0800 073 0510.

ਇਹ ਪਰਚਾ ਵੱਡੇ ਅੱਖਰਾਂ, ਬੋਲ ਕੇ ਰੀਕਾਰਡ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੋਇਆ ਅਤੇ ਦੂਸਰੀਆਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਵੀ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਹੋ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ, 0800 073 0510 ਤੇ ਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ ਜੀ।

Aceasta broșura poate fi pusă la dispoziție tipărită cu caractere mari, versiune audio sau în alte limbi, pentru acest lucru va rugăm să sunați la 0800 073 0510.

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