

TENS machine

Inpatient Pain Team 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 a variety of pain conditions and it can be used instead of, or in addition to, 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 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.
- You are driving, operating machinery, or in the bath or shower.

How do I use a TENS machine?

We may advise that a TENS machine will benefit you after doing an initial pain assessment with you. The pain nurse will go through how to use the machine and will also provide you with the manufacturer's instructions and give you advice on pad placement.

The TENS machine will be given to you for use while you are an inpatient and you can take it home with you, if you wish. You can use TENS throughout the day for as long as you need, ensuring that you take some breaks.

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.

Precautions when using a TENS machine:

- Do not apply pads over an area of broken or damaged skin
- Do not place pads over jewellery
- Do not get pads or the machine wet
- Avoid use whilst sleeping
- Minimal use of 30 minutes. Maximum use 1 hours
- Can be used 2-3 times a day

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:

Inpatient Pain Service on 01384 456111 ext. 2845. You can also ask for us to be bleeped on 7851 (8am to 4pm, Monday to Friday excluding bank holidays).

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

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

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