

Home Care After Spinal Cord Stimulator (SCS) Implant

A spinal cord stimulator (SCS) was implanted today to treat your pain. Carry your spinal cord stimulation patient ID card with you at all times. This card can be shown if a security system is set off by your SCS. This card will also identify you as a recipient of SCS treatment in case of emergency.

After Surgery

For the first week, you may have some pain and swelling at the incision site. You can apply ice for 20 minutes. Make sure you keep the ice off for 20 minutes before applying again. Avoid aspirin and non-steroidal anti-inflammatories or “NSAIDs” (such as ibuprofen, naproxen and meloxicam) which can increase bleeding. You can take your pain medicines and Tylenol® as ordered by your doctor.

Restrictions

You will need to restrict your routines so that the lead wires in your back do not slip or fall out of place. If the leads move out of place, you can lose stimulation. Stimulation may not be restored even if reprogrammed.

Follow your doctor’s instructions for driving and returning to work. Your doctor will tell you how long to follow these restrictions. It can take up to 12 weeks for the leads to heal in place.

- Limit riding in the car to those trips that are necessary.
- Do not raise your arms above your head.

- Do not twist, bend or stretch your body at the waist. Use caution when changing positions. For example, you should log roll in and out of bed and bend with your knees. Do not make any sudden movements.
- Do not lift items weighing more than 5 pounds.

Site Care

You will have an incision in your back where the spinal cord stimulator was implanted. This will be covered by a bandage. You will need to take very good care of the site to avoid infection or bleeding.

You will not be able to take a bath or shower. You will need to take a sponge bath until your sutures/staples are removed.

Keep the area covered with the bandage. If the bandage becomes soiled, dislodged, or wet you will need to call your SCS doctor or nurse.

Check the site daily. Do not remove the bandage. Reinforce your bandage only if needed.

When to Call

Call if you have:

- Pus-like drainage.
- Fever by mouth over 100.4° F for two readings taken 4 hours apart.
- Redness or warmth at the site.
- Excessive swelling, bruising or bleeding.
- Pain you cannot control.

Your spinal cord stimulator leads will take time to heal in place. During this time your stimulator program may need to be adjusted. If you lose stimulation at any time call the clinic. You should have follow-up visits with your SCS provider.

Who to Call

UW Spine Clinic (608) 265-3207

Dr. Michael Suer

UW Pain Clinic (608) 263-9550

Dr. Nalini Sehgal

Dr. Michelle Poliak-Tunis

Dr. Roy Kim

Dr. Keth Pride

Dr. Alaa Abd-Elsayed

After hours, nights and weekends call **(608) 262-0486** or **1-800-323-8942**. Ask for your doctor. The doctor on call will return your call.

Spanish version of this *Health Facts for You* is #6971s

If you are a patient receiving care at UnityPoint – Meriter, Swedish American or a health system outside of UW Health, please use the phone numbers provided in your discharge instructions for any questions or concerns.

Your health care team may have given you this information as part of your care. If so, please use it and call if you have any questions. If this information was not given to you as part of your care, please check with your doctor. This is not medical advice. This is not to be used for diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. Because each person's health needs are different, you should talk with your doctor or others on your health care team when using this information. If you have an emergency, please call 911. Copyright © 6/2020. University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing HF#6971