

Home Care After Spinal Cord Stimulator (SCS) Implant

A spinal cord stimulator (SCS) was implanted today to treat your pain. Always carry your SCS patient ID card with you. You can use this card to show that you have a SES device in case it sets off a security system. This card will also show that you have a SCS device 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” which can increase bleeding. These include ibuprofen, naproxen and meloxicam. You can take your pain medicines and Tylenol® as ordered by your doctor.

Activity Guidelines

You will need to restrict your activities 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.

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.

Signs of Infection

- Fever over 100.4° F by mouth for 2 readings, taken 4 hours apart
- Increased redness, swelling around the site
- Any drainage from the site

When to Call

The day of the procedure, if you have any problems or concerns, call Madison Surgery Center.

For new symptoms or signs of infection call your doctor listed on the After-Visit Summary.

To discuss the next steps in your plan of care, contact the provider that **ordered** your procedure.

Who to Call

Madison Surgery Center (6 am-5 pm)
608-287-2200

UW Pain Clinic
608-263-9550

UW Spine Clinic
608-265-3207

After hours, please contact the ordering provider's clinic or the provider's clinic that performed the procedure. Tell the receptionist you had a procedure that day and need to see your doctor.

For **emergencies** go to the closest emergency room.

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