Home Care after Spinal Cord Stimulator 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 experience discomfort and swelling at the incision site. You can use ice for 20 minutes on and then off 20 minutes. It is okay to use Tylenol to ease this pain. Avoid aspirin which increases bleeding. You can take your pain medicines as ordered by your doctors.

Restrictions
You will need to restrict your routines as directed below 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. It is possible that stimulation may not be restored even with reprogramming. Follow your doctor’s instructions regarding driving, returning to work and for how long you will need 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 absolutely 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, i.e. log roll in and out of bed, bend with your knees. Do not make any sudden movements.
- Do not lift items weighing more than 5 pounds.

Site Care/Bathing and Showering
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 and 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 the Pain Management Clinic.

Check the site daily. Do not remove the bandage. Reinforce your bandage only if needed. Call if you have:
- Pus-like drainage.
- Fever (oral temperature over 100.4 F or 38.0 C for two readings taken 4 hours apart).
- Site is red or warm to touch.
- 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 scheduled in the Pain Management Clinic.

**Phone Numbers**
UW Pain Management Clinic, Dr. Nalini Sehgal, Dr. Michelle Poliak-Tunis, Dr. Peggy Kim and Dr. Alaa Abd-Elsayed  
(608) 263-9550.

After hours, nights and weekends call  
(608) 262-0486 or 1-800-323-8942. For Dr. Sehgal or Dr. Poliak-Tunis, ask for the rehabilitation doctor on call. Leave your name and phone number with the area code. The doctor will call you back. For Dr. Abd-Elsayed and Dr. Kim ask for your doctor to return your call.

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

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 © 6/2017 University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing HF#6971