



Information for
patients and
carers

TENS

(Transcutaneous Electrical Nerve Stimulation)

Your appointment

You will be shown how to use your TENS machine, however it is important that you read this leaflet carefully for your own information and safety.

If you have any problems or queries about your TENS treatment please contact the Clinical Nurse Specialists, via your consultant's secretary.

What is a TENS machine?

The TENS machine will not cure the cause of your pain but is designed to help you to manage your pain.

TENS MAY relieve pain by causing a tingling sensation and this "message" of touch travels to the brain. The brain appears to receive these messages more quickly than the messages about the pain. This is why we instinctively rub an area if it hurts.

When you use the TENS machine you feel the tingling caused by the electrical impulses, hopefully instead of the pain.

Using a TENS machine

It can take time to achieve adequate pain relief with a TENS machine, so please persist. People notice a reduction in pain after different time periods. Initially, you should use the TENS as instructed by the pain management team. It is important however, that you use it for at least 30 minutes. Gradually you will work out a pattern that is beneficial to you. Once you are used to the TENS machine you can use it as and when you need it within the times stated in this leaflet. You can continue with normal activity whilst using the TENS, you do not need to sit or lie down.

Setting the controls

Always check that the machine is turned off before you attach the leads and electrodes.

- Make sure the skin where you are sticking the electrodes is clean and dry as lotions, talc and creams at the electrode site can prevent the electrodes from sticking
- Plug the leads into the electrodes
- Place the electrodes (pads) in the correct position
- Attach the leads to the TENS
- Set the modality switch. N-normal or continuous, M-modulation or massage, or B-burst
- Switch your machine on and slowly turn up the intensity volume you will gradually become aware of a pulsating or tingling sensation
- You should be able to **comfortably** tolerate the stimulation you feel, **Do not** be tempted to turn up the intensity too high
- The pulse volume/width is set at 200
- The pulse frequency/rate is set between 2 - 120
- If normal stimulation is used, turn up until a tingling sensation is felt, to a strength that is strong but **comfortable**. You can use the TENS machine up to 3-4 times daily for 1-2 hours at a time. We do advise that you should not use it for less than 30 minutes as this could aggravate your pain. It is also not recommended to use the TENS whilst you sleep-you need to feel the sensation to achieve benefit

If 'B' - burst stimulation is used, turn up until a muscle contraction is achieved. This should be a slight not vigorous contraction. Use 3-4 times daily for **20 minutes** at a time only. This type of stimulation should be limited because it can tire the muscles. It is not the most comfortable treatment but it can prove effective.

Removing the electrodes

Turn the machine off, carefully remove the electrodes and unplug the leads from the machine. Place the electrodes back onto the plastic and then into a sealed plastic bag. Some people like to place the electrodes in the fridge as they feel it can prolong their lifespan.

Problem solving

- If you experience a reduction of benefit or sensation check that the electrodes are firmly attached, that the connections are secure and that the battery does not need replacing
- If you are concerned there may be a problem with the TENS machine you should stop using the machine and contact the department via your consultant's secretary

Maintenance of the TENS machine

Your electrodes (pads) will wear out and require replacement. Depending on your skin type they will last for between 4-12 weeks. Further supplies of electrodes are available from various companies including The TENS Company who can be contacted by telephone or the website as detailed below:

- Telephone: **01614297330**
- <https://tensmachineuk.com/tens-electrodes.html>

Reordering information - you will need to quote this information when reordering leads and pads.

Pads product code: **SA10**

Lead type: **SKU: TENS35-2**

Replacement batteries can be purchased at most supermarkets or shops.

Do's and don'ts

- DO NOT lend the TENS to other people
- DO NOT wear the TENS in the bath or shower
- DO NOT sleep with it on
- DO NOT use the TENS machine during periods of strenuous activity
- DO NOT use over numb, broken, infected or inflamed skin
- DO NOT use on the front or sides of the neck
- DO NOT drive or operate dangerous machinery with the TENS machine switched on. Your car insurance will not cover you if you have an accident whilst wearing TENS
- DO NOT use TENS if you are pregnant, epileptic or have an internal electrical device such as a pacemaker without specialist advice
- AVOID applying the electrodes to the exact same spot every day
- DO keep the TENS out of children's reach
- DO check the skin for inflammation
- DO use the TENS before the pain becomes severe, it will be more effective
- DO place the electrodes a palm's width apart
- DO continue with your usual medication. Later you may find that you need to take fewer painkillers

DO take care of the TENS because you may have the benefit from it for many years.

TENS review appointment

You will be sent an appointment for review following your initial TENS appointment in approximately 3 months' time.

It is important that you attend the TENS review clinic whether you feel that you have benefited from the TENS or not. If you cannot keep your appointment, please let us know as soon as possible.

Sources of further information

www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk

www.nhs.uk

www.accessable.co.uk

www.patient.co.uk

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/transcutaneous-electrical-nerve-stimulation-tens/>

<https://patient.info/treatment-medication/painkillers/tens-machines>

www.painconcern.org.uk

www.retrainpain.org

All our patient information leaflets are available on our website for patients to access and download:

www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk/patient-information-leaflets

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If you want to stop smoking, you can also contact the Quit Squad Freephone 0800 328 6297.

Please ask if you would like help in understanding this information. This information can be made available in large print and in other languages.

Gujarati:

આ માહિતીને સમજવામાં સહાયતા જોઈતી હોય તો કૃપા કરીને પૂછો. આ માહિતી મોટા છપાણામાં અને અન્ય ભાષામાં ઉપલબ્ધ કરી શકાય છે.

Romanian:

Vă rugăm să întrebați dacă aveți nevoie de ajutor pentru înțelegerea acestor informații. Aceste informații pot fi puse la dispoziție în format mare și în alte limbi.”

Polish:

Poinformuj nas, jeśli potrzebna jest ci pomoc w zrozumieniu tych informacji. Informacje te można również udostępnić dużym drukiem oraz w innych językach

Punjabi:

ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਸਮਝਣ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਮਦਦ ਲੈਣੀ ਚਾਹੋਗੇ ਤਾਂ ਕਰਿਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਇਸ ਬਾਰੇ ਪੁੱਛੋ। ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਵੱਡੇ ਪ੍ਰਿੰਟ ਅਤੇ ਹੋਰਨਾਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਮੁਹੱਈਆ ਕੀਤੀ ਜਾ ਸਕਦੀ ਹੈ।

Urdu:

دو سر ی زبانوں او ر بڑی اگر آپ کو ہی معلومات سمجھنے کے لیے مدد کی ضرورت ہے تو یی چھپا یں ییہ ابی دست بو یسکت ہے برا ئے مہر یان پو ے یچھہی۔ معلومات

Arabic:

مطبوعة بأحرف كبيرة و بلغات إذا كنت تريد مساعدة في فهم هذه المعلومات يُرجى أن تطلب أخرى يمكن تو فسير هذه المعلومات

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