

T.E.N.S. therapy for Chronic Pain Management

Chronic Pain Management Service

The prevention of infection is a major priority in all healthcare and everyone has a part to play.

- Wash your hands with soap and warm water and dry thoroughly. Use hand gel, if provided, in care facilities.
- If you have symptoms of diarrhoea and vomiting stay at home and do not visit relatives that are vulnerable in hospital or in residential care. You will spread the illness.
- Keep the environment clean and safe. Let's work together to keep it that way. Prevention is better than cure.

What is T.E.N.S. Therapy?

T.E.N.S. therapy (Transcutaneous Electrical Nerve Stimulation) is the application of electrical current through the skin for pain relieving effect.

How does a T.E.N.S. machine work?

Usually, pain is a useful warning symptom that tells us when something is wrong. If we hurt ourselves, pain forces us to rest which then allows healing to take place.

The nerves around damaged tissue send pain messages to receptors in the spinal cord. These messages are then switched to other nerves and carried on to the brain. The brain interprets the message and pain is felt.

“Chronic” pain is different because it serves no useful purpose. Unfortunately, nerves continue to send pain messages long after healing has taken place or without any history of injury at all.

The T.E.N.S. machine is a small portable device that is attached to the painful area by self-adhesive pads called electrodes. Once switched on it produces electrical impulses which stimulate the nerves under the skin. The T.E.N.S. machine can work in two separate ways: by blocking pain messages to the spinal cord and by encouraging the body to produce its own pain killing substances called endorphins.

What kind of pain does it work for?

The T.E.N.S. machine will not work for everyone and research findings are varied as to how much it actually controls pain. However, there is some evidence to suggest that it can help with:

Arthritis	Back pain
Neuralgia	Stress
Strains	Headaches
Sciatica	Joint pains
Post Herpetic Neuralgia	
Chronic Musculo-skeletal pain	

(<https://www.pattersonmedical.co.uk>)

How do I attach the T.E.N.S. machine?

You will be given full instruction on how to use the machine, by the Pain Specialist, when you attend for your appointment. A follow-up review date will be arranged to see if the machine is helping you.

1. Insert the battery into the machine and replace the cover. When you switch the machine on, a light should appear next to the controls.
2. Attach the self-adhesive pads to the red and black connectors of the lead. Insert the other end of the lead into the receptor hole of the machine.
3. Place the electrodes on clean, dry skin and avoid any sore or broken areas. Do not put the pads over your heart, eyes and mouth, internally, over folds of skin or at the front of your neck.
4. Turn the dial on and gradually turn up the machine until you start to feel the stimulation. The sensation, often described as a "tingling" feeling should be strong but not uncomfortable. Sometimes, a small degree of muscle twitching is felt.
5. The machine should be used for at least 30 minutes at a time for the pain relieving mechanisms to work. Most people wear the machine for up to two hours at a time, but some use it all day if they have a lot of benefit.
6. When ready, turn off. Return the electrode pads to plastic sheet, put them back into the sealed bag and store in refrigerator.

Are there any side effects?

T.E.N.S. is thought to be a safe, non-invasive method of pain relief, but some people experience skin irritation around the electrode sites. There are alternative gel pads for very sensitive skin.

If the pads touch each other, there is the possibility of receiving a very small electric shock.

You should not use a T.E.N.S. machine:

- If you have heart disease or a pacemaker
- If you are pregnant (unless instructed by a midwife or Doctor)
- If you have epilepsy
- If you have a skin allergy
- Whilst driving or operating machinery
- In the bath or shower
- In bed

What do I do if the machine does not work?

First of all check:

- the battery (the indicator light should switch on)
- the leads (for any breaks in the protective covering and that they are securely attached)
- are you using the correct dial?

You can contact the Pain Management Office on the telephone number overleaf if you require any further help or advice.

What happens at my appointment?

Your Pain Nurse will discuss your needs and instruct you on the use of the machine and the best way to apply electrodes. You can loan the machine for approximately one month. You will then return to see the Pain Nurse who will assess if the treatment has been successful.

If successful you have the opportunity to buy a machine for your personal use. The Nurse will give you instructions on how to do this during your appointment.

If you decide to buy a machine, the on-going costs of batteries and electrodes will be your responsibility.

Helpful references:

<http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Back-pain/Pages/Treatment.aspx>

<http://www.patient.co.uk/health/tens-machines>

<https://www.pattersonmedical.co.uk>

Additional information

The information in this leaflet is not intended to replace your doctor's advice. If you require more information or have any questions please contact the CPMS Team on 01902 307999 Ext 5122.

English

If you need information in another way like easy read or a different language please let us know.

If you need an interpreter or assistance please let us know.

Lithuanian

Jeigu norėtumėte, kad informacija jums būtų pateikta kitu būdu, pavyzdžiui, supaprastinta forma ar kita kalba, prašome mums apie tai pranešti.

Jeigu jums reikia vertėjo ar kitos pagalbos, prašome mums apie tai pranešti.

Polish

Jeżeli chcieliby Państwo otrzymać te informacje w innej postaci, na przykład w wersji łatwej do czytania lub w innym języku, prosimy powiedzieć nam o tym.

Prosimy poinformować nas również, jeżeli potrzebowałiby Państwo usługi tłumaczenia ustnego lub innej pomocy.

Punjabi

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ, ਜਿਵੇਂ ਪੜ੍ਹਨ ਵਿਚ ਆਸਾਨ ਰੂਪ ਜਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਦੂਜੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ, ਚਾਹੀਦੀ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ।

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਦੁਭਾਸ਼ੀਏ ਦੀ ਜਾਂ ਸਹਾਇਤਾ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ।

Romanian

Dacă aveți nevoie de informații în alt format, ca de exemplu caractere ușor de citit sau altă limbă, vă rugăm să ne informați.

Dacă aveți nevoie de un interpret sau de asistență, vă rugăm să ne informați.

Traditional Chinese

如果您需要以其他方式了解信息，如易读或其他语种，请告诉我们。

如果您需要口译人员或帮助，请告诉我们。