

Neuromuscular Electrical Nerve Stimulation



Physiotherapy Department

Your physiotherapist has suggested you may benefit from using a Neuromuscular Electrical Nerve stimulation (NMES) unit as part of your treatment. This leaflet is designed to explain what electrical stimulation involves and how to use the unit.

What is it?

NMES involves passing electrical current through the pelvic floor muscles. This causes them to contract and improve your pelvic floor muscle tone/strength. NMES may be used to:

- Promote continence
- Increase muscle strength
- Increase and improve the blood supply to the muscle
- Reduce pain

NMES should not be painful. It is often described as a tingling or buzzing sensation around the pelvic floor muscle area. By activating your muscles with the stimulation you are encouraging activation of more muscle fibres as well as increasing movement which heightens your awareness of where the muscles are located.

How do I use the machine?

1. Insert a battery into the machine. (Your therapist will have done this for you)
2. Insert lead wires into the left hand channel on the machine.
3. Cover the metal part of the probe with a water-based lubricant gel. This makes the stimulation more comfortable.
4. Insert the probe into the vagina or back passage as shown by your therapist. **DO NOT insert the probe with the machine attached and turned on.**
5. Connect the wires from the probe to the lead on the machine
6. Switch on the unit using the power button at the top of the machine

7. Press the PRG button on the machine and select the programme that has been chosen for you. (Your physiotherapist may have locked the machine in which case your selected programme should appear when you switch the unit on.)
8. Press the + button underneath where the probe wire inserts on the left into the machine to increase the intensity to the maximum level that you are able to tolerate. You are aiming for a strong but comfortable sensation.
 - a. As you increase the intensity of stimulation you may feel the pelvic floor muscles tighten. If you are able, try to join in and “squeeze” with the machine.
 - b. If your muscles are very weak you need to gradually increase the duration of NMES to ensure you do not fatigue your muscles. Initially keep the duration of NMES to 5-10 minutes. If you do not notice any aching within your muscles after treatment, you can increase the time on the next use of the machine.

During a treatment session or over time your muscles may become used to the machine such that your awareness or response to the initial stimulus is reduced. If this occurs you will need to increase the intensity in order to maximise treatment potential.

9. After use turn the machine off. You can turn the machine off earlier than your set programme duration if necessary.
10. First remove the unit and then the probe.
11. Clean the probe (see below).

Chosen programme:						
Work (secs):	Rest (secs):	Ramp Up:	Ramp down:	Frequency (HZ):	Duration (pulse width):	Tim (mins):
Intensity (MAmp):						
Frequency per week:						

Cleaning the probe:

Clean your probe with warm soapy water after each use and allow to dry. Be careful not to get the machine wet.

The probe is for your use only.

Are there any risks?

There should not be any harm in using the NMES unit or probe. If you experience any vaginal irritation, bleeding or pain then stop using the machine at once and contact your physiotherapist.

We advise that NMES should not be used during your period, as this reduces the effectiveness of the treatment.

When should I not use the stimulation machine?

There are certain conditions that prohibit the use of NMES. Your physiotherapist will have checked that this treatment option is safe for you but please discuss with them if you have any of the following conditions:

- Fitted with a cardiac pacemaker
- Pregnant
- Undiagnosed pain condition
- Undiagnosed skin, vaginal or anal conditions
- Recent urinary tract or vaginal infection
- Active disease in the area being treated
- Any tissue damage in the area being treated

Do not use the anal probe if you have:

- Acute haemorrhoids
- Anal fissure
- Acute attack of irritable bowel syndrome (including chrons disease, ulcerative colitis) of the larger bowel.

Remember

Stimulation is the start of the rehabilitation process. Once you have used the stimulation unit to activate the muscles it is important that you activate your pelvic floor muscles about 3 times a day. Your physiotherapist can guide you on the appropriate number of repetitions for you.

Therapist:		
Date of Loan:		
Agreed date of return:		
Payment:	Refundable deposit for hire	£40 (cash / cheque)
	Charge for 6 week loan	£20 / free
	Probe payment	£11 / £25 / free

Key References

Pelvic Obstetric and Gynaecological Physiotherapy (POGP)

Pogp.csp.org.uk

Notes

Contact details

For further information, please do not hesitate to contact physiotherapy

Physiotherapy Services
(Male and Female Health Team)

Royal Surrey County Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
Egerton Road,
Guildford,
Surrey, GU2 7XX

01483 464153

PALS and Advocacy contact details

Contact details of independent advocacy services can be provided by our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) who are located on the right hand side as you enter the main reception area. PALS are also your first point of contact for health related issues, questions or concerns surrounding RSCH patient services.

Telephone: 01483 402757

Email: rsc-tr.pals@nhs.net

Opening hours: 9.00am–3.00pm, Monday to Friday

If you would like information documents in large print, on tape or in another language or form please contact PALS.

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Author: Parveen Annear

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