

References

- Johnson, M. (2014) Transcutaneous nerve stimulation (TENS) Research to support clinical practice Oxford University Press.
- Johnson, M. (2014) Transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation: review of effectiveness', Nursing standard, 28(40), pp.44-52.
- Vance, C., Dailey, D., B. & Sluka, K. (2014) Using TENS for pain control: the state of evidence' Pain Management 4(3), pp. 197-209.

Notes

Contact details

Should you have any questions or require more information you can contact our Pain Nurse Advice line.

Telephone: 01483 408303

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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Transcutaneous Electrical Nerve Stimulation (TENS)

Pain Management Department



Patient information leaflet

This leaflet aims to give you some information about a TENS machine and how it may be useful for managing your pain in the future.

Why do we have pain?

Pain is the body's warning system to alert us to injury or illness. In the short-term this is useful but does not usually serve this purpose if the pain lasts longer than three months. If pain continues it can impact on a person's quality of life, function and ability to complete even the simplest of tasks.

What is a TENS?

A TENS machine is a small, battery-operated device that has leads connected to sticky pads called electrodes which are then placed around your area of pain. It works in three ways:

- By blocking pain messages in the nervous system.
- By helping your body to release natural painkillers.
- By helping to relax tense muscles and promote increased movement of the body.

Will a TENS take my pain away?

A TENS may help with reducing your pain, promote activity and movement of your body which may have become limited due to short or long-term pain. If you have problems getting to sleep due to pain it may be helpful before bedtime. It can be useful in combination with other

interventions/therapies to help with a person's rehabilitation.

Is it safe for me to use a TENS?

A TENS is a safe machine with few side effects, however if you are fitted with a cardiac pacemaker, pregnant or have epilepsy you should seek advice from a pain nurse in the TENS Clinic. It is not advised that you use a TENS when operating heavy machinery, driving or in the bath/shower.

Benefits of TENS

- It is not addictive.
- Inexpensive.
- Safe to use.
- Effective for reducing pain and improving movement of the body.

When Should I use a TENS?

You should use a TENS to suit your individual needs. For example:

- Use at work, home or in the natural environment.
- While walking, sitting or lying.
- When going out to the cinema.
- To relax at home.
- To help with getting to sleep (not to use whilst sleeping).
- To go to social events.
- To help 'flare-up' of pain.
- To help with increased activity.

Where should I put the pads?

Make sure the machine is switched off before applying the pads to your skin. Position the pads either side of the painful area, at least 2.5cm (1 inch) apart.

Never place the pads over:

- the front or sides of your neck
- your temples
- your mouth or eyes
- your chest and upper back at the same time
- irritated, infected or broken skin
- numb areas
- varicose veins.

To get the most benefit from TENS, it is important that the settings are adjusted correctly for you and your individual condition. An appointment will be made for you with a pain nurse in TENS Clinic where this can be discussed and you would have the option of being loaned a machine. Should you wish to read any further information on TENS the NHS Choices website has useful information and guidance.

- **NHS CHOICES:**
www.nhs.uk/conditions/transcutaneous-electrical-nerve-stimulation-tens/
- Should you have any questions or require more information you can contact our Pain Nurse Advice line on **01483 408303**.