



SPINAL CORD STIMULATOR

Spinal cord stimulation has been successful in pain management of a subgroup of back pain patients that do not respond to minimally invasive procedures such as epidural injections, and are not candidates for spinal surgical interventions. This modality has also been successfully used in patients with Failed Back Surgery Syndrome, Neuropathies/Neuralgias, Peripheral Vascular Disease, Arachnoiditis, Phantom Limb Pain, and Complex Regional Pain Syndrome. After initial evaluation, if you are deemed to be a good candidate, educational material in the form of a video tape and brochure will be given to you by your physician. A psychological evaluation might be necessary prior to the procedure; in some situations, the insurance companies mandate this evaluation.

The procedure is performed in two stages. The first step is the trial and does not involve an incision. During this stage, after an IV antibiotic infusion is started in the preop area, you will be placed in the prone (face down) position. The area of initial injection will be numbed by local anesthetics and, using x-ray guidance, the epidural space will be accessed by a needle. The spinal cord leads will then be advanced into the epidural space to the desired level using fluoroscopic guidance.

The physician will use an x-ray machine during this procedure. If you are pregnant, it is important to inform your physician.

During the procedure, your physician will ask you questions about the quality of stimulation and the coverage area. If the painful areas are covered successfully, the leads will be tied to your back and connected to an external device the size of a remote control. You will have the ability to control the extent of stimulation with this device. You will be sent home after the procedure to try the device for a week. If the trial is not successful, the leads will be taken out of your back easily in a few minutes.

Only if the trial part is beneficial will the second stage will be scheduled. This part will involve two small incisions in the back and buttocks area, but all of the other steps are similar to the trial. This stage is also an outpatient procedure, and you will go home after recovery from anesthesia. The sutures/staples will be removed in the office within one week after the procedure.