

# What is Spinal Cord Stimulation (SCS) ?

Spinal cord stimulation is a therapy that works by delivering a mild electrical impulse to the spinal cord to block pain signals from traveling up to the brain. It is a treatment generally reserved for severe intractable neuropathic pain despite multiple surgical interventions.

Patients are considered for neurostimulation if they have moderate to high intensity, persistent neuropathic pain and if more conservative strategies have been comprehensively applied but have failed. This is called refractory neuropathic pain.

\*The various forms of SCS include:

- Dorsal root ganglion (DRG) stimulation
- High frequency stimulation
- Burst stimulation
- High density stimulation

\*The type of stimulation and brand will be selected by your doctor according to your medical history and particular needs.

You will have a trial period with temporary epidural leads connected to an external battery for 7 to 10 days to assess its efficacy before deciding on permanent implantation.



For more Information,  
Videos and Resources,  
visit our website.

**[advancedspinepain.com.au](http://advancedspinepain.com.au)**

## Locations

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## Spinal Cord Stimulation Trial

## **What to do before the procedure?**

Organise transport home with a family member or friend as you won't be able to drive for 24 hours following your procedure.

You will be advised of your fasting and admission time.

If you are on regular medication, you may take it with a sip of water on the morning of your procedure.

Please tell your doctor if you are taking blood-thinning medications because you might need to stop them.

Unable to take Diabetes medications morning of procedure.

Continue ALL of your pain medication as usual.

If you are a smoker, you are required to stop smoking a minimum of 7 days before your procedure.

The SCS company representative will contact you with some information regarding the SCS technology to be trialled.

## **What happens at the hospital?**

You will be admitted for the procedure and changed into a hospital gown.

Our Anaesthetist will provide sedation before the procedure through an IV drip.

The procedure takes around 40 mins to 1 hour.

With some SCS devices, you will be woken up during the surgery to tell us whether you can feel the stimulation in the targeted area. If you feel it in the correct area it means that the SCS is correctly positioned in your spine.

After the procedure, you will be taken to the Recovery Room where you will rest.

## **When should I start to feel pain relief?**

It may take up to 48 hours for most patients to feel the pain relief effects. However, others may have a more immediate effect.

## **What happens when I go home?**

You will be asked not to shower during your 7 - 10 day trial.

It is very important to keep the site of the lead insertion clean and dry to avoid infection.

Normal activities may resume as soon as possible. You will be asked to maintain a reasonable degree of activity to accurately test the device.

## **When to seek medical attention?**

Contact your GP or Local Emergency Department, if you experience the following:

- A temperature above 38° that does not improve.
- Loss of bowel or bladder control.
- Loss or worsening of muscle strength in the limbs.
- A headache in the standing position that is only relieved by lying down.
- Pus coming out of the surgical wounds.

## **When should I come back for a follow-up?**

Your doctor will ask you to come back for a consult during the following week of your trial.

You will be required to come back for two follow up consultations the following week of your procedure to check on your progress and discuss next steps and remove the leads from the trial.

## **What activities can I do after the procedure?**

In the first 24 hours: We recommend that you rest and only participate in necessary gentle daily activities. Continue taking your prescribed medications as advised by your doctor.

In the first 2 to 3 days: You may experience discomfort, for which you may take simple analgesics like Panadol or Nurofen.

In the first 7 to 10 days: You will be asked to monitor your pain, activity, sleep and need for medication. The SCS representative will be in touch with you but if you have any medical concerns please contact our rooms and someone will be able to help you.

For the whole trial period: You will be asked to avoid strenuous activities which involve reaching up with your arms, excessive twisting or bending to prevent lead migration.

## **What happens after the trial?**

You will be reviewed by your doctor who will decide when to remove the trial electrodes. Once removed, your usual pain will return in 24 - 48 hours.

If the trial is successful, you will be scheduled for the permanent spinal cord stimulator implant around 4-6 weeks after your trial.