

Electrical stimulation for the Pelvic Floor and Bladder

Physiotherapy Patient Information

This leaflet explains what electrical stimulation involves and how to use the stimulation machine. It is very important that you read this information leaflet and the one provided by the manufacturer in the stimulation kit. This will make sure you are doing everything right. If you have any questions, discuss these with your Physiotherapist.

What is electrical stimulation?

As a treatment for incontinence, electrical stimulation involves passing a small electrical current through the muscles around your bladder. This makes them contract and can therefore help to improve your pelvic floor muscle tone. It can also help to reduce your urgency to go to the toilet.

Your Physiotherapist may have recommended electrical stimulation because you have difficulty finding or contracting your pelvic floor muscles. You may have already had treatment for incontinence and this is being suggested to improve your symptoms further.

What are the alternatives?

Other forms of treatment for incontinence include pelvic floor exercises, vaginal cones, bladder retraining, medication, and other general fluid and health promotion advice.

The RUH will loan you a stimulation machine from the hospital, or you can organise this through desmitmedical.com (your Physiotherapist will give you the details). We will also give you a reusable probe for you to use with the stimulation machine. You must not share this with anyone else. Your treatment course could last up to 12 weeks, depending on your symptoms and progress. We will ask you to use the machine regularly. Try to use it every day, but if you are unable to do that, use it at least every other day.

How do I use the machine?

Your Physiotherapist will teach you how to use the machine correctly. Here is a short guide to help you set up at home:

- - Insert the battery into the machine. Do not leave the battery in the machine for longer than a week at a time without using the machine.
 - Insert the lead wire into channel A.
- - Put some lubricating jelly onto the metal parts of the vaginal probe, making sure that the surfaces are completely covered. We use optilube in the hospital.
 - Insert the probe into your vagina with the metal parts facing each hip.
- - Connect the wires on the vaginal probe to the machine.
 - Switch on the unit by pressing the power button on the top of the machine.
 - Press the programme button (PRG) and select the programme that you have discussed with your Physiotherapist.
- - To start the programme, press the + button underneath A on the left side of the PRG button, and keep pressing it until you reach a comfortable intensity. It will be a tingling sensation to start with, then as you increase the intensity you will feel the muscles start to contract.
- - When you have learnt what it feels like to contract your pelvic floor muscles, join in with the machine and contract your pelvic floor at the same time.
 - After use, turn off the machine.
- - First, remove the equipment cable and then the probe from your vagina.
 - Clean and dry the probe as instructed below and store with the stimulator machine.

It's also really important to continue with your own pelvic floor exercises (See separate section [Pelvic Floor exercises](#)) as discussed with your Physiotherapist.

Cleaning the vaginal probe

Your vaginal probe must be washed in warm soapy water at the end of each treatment. Take care not to get the wires wet. Dry the probe and store it safely with the stimulator machine until your next treatment.



Are there any risks?

The treatment does not generally cause any problems. However, if you experience any of the following while using the machine, stop using it and contact your Physiotherapist:

- Vaginal irritation
- Pain
- Bleeding

Can I use the machine while I am having my period?

Yes, if you feel comfortable doing so. However, if you have period-related cramps or pains, the electrical stimulation may make them worse.

When should I not use the machine?

If you have any of the following:

- A pacemaker
- A vaginal infection or a sore vagina
- Diabetes
- Haemophilia
- A history of pelvic cancer
- Reduced skin sensation
- A urinary tract infection
- A current abnormal smear
- A Pessary that you cannot remove before using the machine.

Follow-up appointments

You will be given clinic appointments both during and after your treatment to check on your progress. Please always bring your probe with you to these appointments. If you forget it, we will have to cancel your appointment or you will need to buy another probe. We are only able to give one probe to each patient due to cost.

Useful Links:

<https://www.desmitmedical.com/pdf/verity/electrical-stimulation-and-biofeedback-faq.pdf>

If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to call Physiotherapy reception on [\(01225\) 821241](tel:01225821241). They will be able to direct you to your Physiotherapist.

Alternatively, you can email ruh-tr.therapiesoutpatientadmin@nhs.net
To access video links and further support, please visit the Physiotherapy webpage: <https://ruh.nhs.uk/patients/services/physiotherapy/>



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Please contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) if you require this leaflet in a different format, or would like to feedback your experience of the hospital. Email ruh-tr.pals@nhs.net or telephone 01225 825656 / 826319.