



## *Information for You from Your Health Care Team*

### **Dorsal Column Spinal Cord Stimulator**

A Dorsal Column Spinal Cord Stimulator is a special device that stimulates nerves by tiny electrical impulses sent by small electrical wires that area placed on the spinal cord.

#### **When is Dorsal Column Spinal Cord Stimulator Used?**

The dorsal column spinal cord stimulator is used for:

- Pain that persists even after multiple back surgeries (Failed Back Syndrome)
- Complex Regional Pain Syndrome (RSK & Causalgia)
- Peripheral Vascular disease and ischemic pain
- Phantom Limb Pain
- Post Herpetic neuralgia

#### **How is a Dorsal Column Spinal Cord Stimulator inserted?**

You will be admitted t the hospital for placement of the stimulator. The placement of the stimulator is done in two stages. The first stage is the trial period. In the first stage the epidural electrode (stimulating lead) will be placed under local anesthesia. This is done in the operating room. Once the placement of the lead is confirmed by x-ray it is connected to an external stimulator and stimulated. When the level of stimulation is reached that will control the pain the lead is sutured into place. One end of the lead is brought out through the skin. Once you are in the recovery room this will be connected to the external stimulator. You will be taught how to use the stimulator. You will need to stay in the hospital after the surgery for 23 hours and will be able to go home the next day.

In about 7 to 14 days the second stage of the procedure is done. The second stage is only done if you are satisfied that the stimulation is controlling the pain. This will be done under general anesthesia usually. An implantable stimulator will be placed in a pocket made on the abdominal wall underneath the skin. This is usually done under general anesthesia. The stimulating lead is tunneled under the skin and connected to this stimulator.

## **Dorsal Column Spinal Cord Stimulator** *Continued*

### **How long does the Dorsal Column Spinal Cord Stimulator last?**

Depending upon how much the device is used (intensity and duration), the batteries in the generator usually last five years. The batteries cannot be replaced or recharged.

### **What do I need to do after the procedure?**

- You will need to be on bed rest for 12 hours after the procedure.
- Walk for brief periods of time each day keeping back straight.
- Do not tug on the wire at the exit site.
- Do not take a bath or shower. You may sponge bath. Make sure you do not get the wire wet.
- No heavy lifting or excessive bending for 6 weeks.

### **What are the side effects and possible complications?**

- Bleeding
- Infection
- Risks of general anesthesia and surgery
- Neurological injury
- Malfunction of generator
- Lead disconnection
- Living with Spinal Cord Stimulator

You will need to:

- Take special precaution with electronic systems that contain magnets. This includes security detectors found in libraries and airports.
- Turn the stimulation off when driving a car.
- You will need to avoid pacemakers, defibrillators, diathermy, therapeutic X-rays and MRI.