

PAEDIATRIC UROLOGY

Transcutaneous Nerve Stimulation (TENS)

Information for Parents

Introduction.

Your child's Doctor/Nurse has advised you that your child needs to have TENS. This fact sheet aims to support the discussion you had with the clinician and to enable you to make an informed decision.

What is TENS?

TENS involves the passage of low-voltage current to electrodes (square adhesive pads) placed on the skin. The current is delivered through wires from a small battery operated unit. The TENS electrodes are placed on your child's lower back, near the area of the spinal cord which supplies the nerves to the bladder.

TENS is used to treat symptoms of an overactive bladder. These symptoms include the need to urinate or wee frequently, sometimes with little warning (urgency). Urgency can lead to wetting accidents. Children with overactive bladders may need to urinate more often than usual because their bladder has uncontrollable spasms. In addition their bladder may be smaller than expected for their age.

What are the benefits of my child having TENS?

TENS can help reduce urinary frequency and increase bladder capacity by calming bladder spasms.

What are the risks of my child having TENS?

TENS use in children with overactive bladder is safe and well tolerated. Side effects are usually rare and mild. The skin may become irritated at the site of the electrodes. This is less likely to happen if the electrodes are not put in the same place every time. Your child's skin should be checked regularly for signs of irritation. TENS electrodes should not be applied to broken skin. Please contact your Nurse if you have any concerns regarding side effects.

TENS should only be used on your child as directed by your Doctor/Nurse. It should not be used in or near water.

Will this TENS hurt my child?

When the TENS is switched on your child will feel a tingling sensation. The level of stimulation may be increased as long as your child does not complain of discomfort. The best results are achieved if the stimulation is set at the highest level that is comfortable for your child. For this reason success using TENS often requires patience to find the most appropriate level of stimulation.

Are there any alternatives to this procedure?

Medications may be used in addition to or as an alternative to TENS. Your child's Doctor/Nurse will discuss this with you.

What will happen if I decide my child will not have TENS?

Your child's Doctor/Nurse will discuss alternatives to TENS, including medication.

How long will this procedure take?

TENS may be used at home for up to 2 hours every day as long as your child remains comfortable. Most children use it for 2 hours in the evening before bed. TENS should not be used during the night or at school. It should not be used for longer than 2 hours each day.

The duration of treatment is variable according to your child's response. Your child's Doctor/Nurse will give advice as to how long to continue using TENS.

How long will my child be in hospital?

Your child will be shown how to use TENS in the outpatient's department. They will then use TENS at home.

Further appointment information.

Please inform your clinician if there are any problems with the function of the TENS machine. The batteries may need replacing if the machine is used over a long period of time. Your Doctor/Nurse will show you how to do this.

Your child will receive regular follow-up, usually once every 6 weeks, to monitor their progress. Your child may be asked to complete a diary before the appointment. This is to monitor

whether there have been any changes in your child's symptoms.

If you have any questions or concerns before your child's appointment date please contact your child's Nurse on the number below.

For further information.

Please contact the Urology Nurses 0115 9709408.

This leaflet only gives general information. You must always discuss the individual treatment of your child with the appropriate member of staff. Do not rely on this leaflet alone for information about your child's treatment.

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