



Information for Patients

Percutaneous Tibial Nerve Stimulation (PTNS)

What is Nerve Stimulation (neurostimulation)?

Bladder function is regulated by a group of nerves at the base of the spine called the sacral nerve plexus. By stimulating these nerves through gentle electrical impulses (neurostimulation), your bladder activity can be changed. One way to do this is to surgically implant a stimulator into your buttocks to send continuous impulses to the sacral nerves.

Another way is with PTNS, an out-patient treatment for urinary urgency, frequency and urge incontinence.

Why do I need it?

You have a condition called overactive bladder. This means you may have some or all of the following:

- Passing urine more frequently than normal.
- Have a strong urge to pass urine that you cannot put off.
- Urinary leakage when you cannot get to the toilet quickly enough.
- Getting up to pass urine more than once through the night.

If other forms of treatment, for example bladder retraining, diet and fluid advice, or medication, have not helped your bladder problem, you may be offered PTNS.

You are being offered PTNS because alternative treatments such as botulinum toxin or sacral nerve stimulation are either not suitable for you or not acceptable to you. As it is a relatively new treatment we do not yet know enough about how well it works to use it routinely for all patients.

What will happen to me when I have PTNS?

A small, slim needle is inserted into the skin near your ankle. This is connected to a battery powered stimulator box. The nurse will turn on the stimulator and observe your response to determine the ideal strength of impulses needed.

Each treatment session will last for 30 minutes. You will have 12 treatment sessions to start with, typically one week apart.

Two weeks after the 12th treatment you will see your nurse in clinic to discuss how your bladder is behaving and how often you will need future treatments to maintain the improvement.

You will be given a bladder diary to complete 6 weeks into your treatment and at the end of the 12 weeks. It is very important that you complete and return this so that we can assess how effective the treatment has been for you.

What will I feel with PTNS?

Because patients may experience the sensation of PTNS treatment in different ways, it is difficult to say what the treatment will feel like to you, but it is typically well tolerated. PTNS offers many levels of stimulation so your nurse can adjust treatment to suit you and find a comfortable level of stimulation.

How soon will I see results?

Because PTNS gently modifies the signals to achieve bladder control, it will probably take at least 6 treatments before you see your symptoms change. It is important that you continue receiving treatments for the recommended 12 weeks before you and your nurse discuss whether it is appropriate to continue treatment.

How successful is PTNS?

60-80% of patients (60-80 out of 100) see an improvement in bladder symptoms.

Is there anything I need to do to prepare for the test?

No. There are no special preparations. You may wish to bring a book to read or some other distraction with you to pass the time. You can eat and drink normally before and during the treatment so you may bring a drink with you if you wish.

Will there be any side effects?

You may experience very minor irritation and/or bleeding where the needle has been inserted and there may be a slight aching around the ankle after the treatment. These symptoms are very short lived and will usually go away within a few hours.

Further information:

If you have any questions please contact the Warrell Unit Clinical Nurse Specialist on:

(0161) 701 6150, Monday – Friday, 8.30 am – 5.00 pm.

Useful website:

www.bladderandbowelfoundation.org

Please use this space to write down any questions or concerns you may have.