

Discharge following DBS for Pain

You have been given this leaflet because you have been implanted with a Deep Brain Stimulator for treatment of your chronic pain condition. This leaflet contains answers to some of the questions patients most often ask when they go home. It is intended as a guide. If you have any specific queries that are not answered here, please discuss these with your nurse or doctor.

Going home

You may feel concerned about the thought of returning home after your operation. Hopefully during your stay with us your questions will have been answered. This leaflet has been designed by the Neuromodulation team to give you support and guidance about your recovery at home.

We feel it is important that you do not feel alone and isolated at home, so please do not hesitate to call us if you need specific advice. Your Neuromodulation Nurse has an answer phone system which you can reach on **020 8725 2332**.

Alternatively your GP and practice nurse are there to help as is Mr Pereira's secretary who can be contacted on **020 8725 4173**. You can also contact the neurosurgical wards.

How do I look after my wounds?

Your stitches or staples need to be taken out on the 10th -14th day after the operation. This may be done before you go home. If not, then you will need to make an appointment with the Practice Nurse to do this at your GP's surgery. As the wound is already healing it does not need any special attention. A shower is preferable to a bath. This prevents

the wound from becoming sodden (soaking wet), which can increase the risk of infection and delay healing.

You must see your GP as a matter of urgency, if you notice any of the following symptoms. They may indicate an infection that needs treatment with antibiotics. Please also inform your Neuromodulation team at the Hospital.

- Any leakage from the wound. This may be brown, green or clear.
- An increase in soreness or very bad itching after initial improvement post-operatively.
- Redness or any swelling or pain at or around the wound site
- Any fever/high temperature.

How soon will I be getting back to normal?

As soon as the initial tiredness passes you can look forward to gradually getting back to normal. It is quite normal to feel very tired for the first couple of weeks and we advise you to take plenty of rest during the day. As you begin to feel less tired, you may want to do more as each day passes. There are no restrictions on doing things such as seeing friends, going shopping or travelling.

About the stimulator

You should have been given a booklet that is written by the company which made your stimulator. Please read it carefully. If there is anything that is not clear, do not hesitate to ask your nurse or a member of the Neuromodulation team.

If you need any surgery, X-rays, invasive procedures (a procedure that may cause bleeding) or dental treatment (which might also use ultrasonic probes) in the future, please contact the Nurse Specialist for advice.

When you are out and about, you must remember to watch out for signs asking people with cardiac pacemakers to see a member of staff. This is because your neurostimulator works in a very similar way to these and there may be special precautions you need to take. Before you leave hospital you will be given an identity card with details of your stimulator. Remember to carry this with you.

Will my medication be changed?

Every patient responds differently to his or her medication and to this type of surgery.

Your medication may be changed before you leave the hospital and, if so, a member of the team will discuss this with you. If you are unsure about the medication you are taking, please discuss this with us before you leave the ward. Once you get home, if you experience any symptoms that are unusual for you, please consult your GP or contact the ward or Nurse Specialist.

What about work?

How quickly you return to work depends on what you do. You should discuss this with your Doctor before you leave hospital or at your outpatient appointment. A period of four to six weeks off work is not unusual. If you need a sickness certificate please ask for this before you go home.

Will I be able to drive?

You should not drive for six weeks after your Deep Brain Stimulator operation. By law, you must inform the DVLA and your insurance company of your operation. They will tell you if there are any specific regulations or changes to your policy after Deep Brain Stimulation.

When can I resume sexual activity?

The simple answer to this is when you are ready. If you are unsure about how your medications affect oral contraception please ask your GP or pharmacist for advice. The stimulator itself will not affect any method of contraception used.

What about complications?

You have already started on the road to a good recovery and we are confident that this should continue at home.

Sometimes, for whatever reason, people may develop post-operative complications or side effects from stimulation. Please see your GP or 'phone the neurosurgical ward if you experience:

- Any different, worsening or sudden headache
- Any stiffness, high temperature or pain when you look at a light
- A rash
- Lethargy or tiredness that doesn't improve
- Any chest pain or calf pain
- Fits or "funny turns"
- Blurred vision or worsening vision
- Drowsiness, confusion, or any weakness in the arms or legs
- Any hallucinations
- Vomiting or feeling sick.

Going home checklist

- Tablets and a discharge summary
- Any of your own tablets
- Transport – your own or hospital transport if necessary
- All of your belongings, including any valuables we have locked away.

Follow up

You will have been given an Outpatient appointment – either before you leave the ward or sent in the post. If you have not received anything four weeks after your discharge please contact Mr Pereira's secretary or the Clinical Nurse Specialist.

Contact us

Your Neuromodulation Nurse has an answer phone system which you can reach on **020 8725 2332**.

Additional services

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

PALS can offer you on-the-spot advice and information when you have comments or concerns about our services or the care you have received. You can visit the PALS office between 9.30am and 4.30pm, Monday to Friday in the main corridor between Grosvenor and Lanesborough wings (near the lift foyer).

Tel: 020 8725 2453 **Email:** pals@stgeorges.nhs.uk

NHS Choices

NHS Choices provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make decisions about your health.

Web: www.nhs.uk

NHS 111

You can call 111 when you need medical help fast but it's not a 999 emergency. NHS 111 is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Calls are free from landlines and mobile phones. **Tel:** 111

AccessAble

You can download accessibility guides for all of our services by searching 'St George's Hospital' on the AccessAble website (www.accessable.co.uk). The guides are designed to ensure everyone – including those with accessibility needs – can access our hospital and community sites with confidence.



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