

Spinal Cord Stimulator Paddle Trial

Insurance Requirements

We will work with the Duke pre-registration department to submit for prior authorization to your insurance company before your Spinal Cord Stimulator (SCS) Trial and again for the SCS Implant. This process begins once you are placed on the OR schedule. Before we can place you on the OR schedule, you will need to have a psychological evaluation. Most insurance companies require this before they will consider the procedure. Once your psychological evaluation is completed and all requested imaging has been received at our office, we will send your supporting medical documentation (i.e. visit notes, MRI reports, psychological evaluation, etc) to your insurance for approval.

What is a Spinal Cord Stimulator (SCS) Paddle Trial?

The SCS paddle trial is a 2 stage procedure. During the first stage we will place a paddle lead in the epidural space of the thoracic spine. The first stage is an open procedure and will involve removing a small part of a vertebral bone (laminectomy) so that the paddle can be placed appropriately.

During the second stage, the leads from the paddle will be attached to an external power source for the trial period to determine if the stimulation covers the area of pain.

If you have greater than 50% reduction in pain, a decrease in pain medication, and a greater enjoyment in your everyday activities this will be deemed a successful trial. If this is not a successful trial then the paddle lead will be removed in the OR.

After the Trial leads are placed, you will return to the office in 3-5 days to have the Trial leads removed. If you have experienced significant relief from this device, we will be in contact with you in order to schedule the Permanent Implant. Most insurance companies need to see the outcome of the Trial before approving the implant.

If you are on any blood thinners (i.e. Aspirin, Excedrin, Vitamin E, Fish Oil, Coumadin, Plavix, etc) you will be given special instructions on when to hold these medications.

If you become ill or are put on antibiotics for any reason, please notify the office prior to arriving for your procedure. Like any other procedures, we will not be able to do these procedures if there is a chance of infection.



Restrictions after the SCS Trial Placement

- Have a responsible adult stay with you for at least 24 hours. You may experience some drowsiness, light-headedness or mild nausea. Stand and move with caution.
- Resume usual activities the following day – especially those activities that cause familiar pain.
- Use caution when changing positions. Move without twisting by moving your shoulder and hip at the same time.
- DO NOT drive, operate equipment or make business decisions for 24 hours.
- DO NOT drive with the system on.
- DO NOT reach, bend, stretch, twist, or lift more than 5 lbs.
- DO NOT disconnect the Trial cable from the leads.
- You have no restrictions on diet.
- Drink plenty of fluids.
- Take Keflex or other antibiotic as prescribed during the trial period.

- You may take Benadryl per package instructions for mild itching from the dressing.
Site Care
- DO NOT REMOVE THE DRESSING. Keep the dressing clean and dry. You may reinforce the dressing with medical tape if it becomes loose.
- DO NOT SHOWER OR TUB BATHE. You may sponge bathe during the trial.
- DO NOT pull on or become entangled in the cable.

What do I expect post trial implant?

After your Spinal Cord Stimulator is implanted, follow-up in the office 3-5 days from your surgery date is required. Bring all the materials you received in the hospital. You will be provided instructions on how to charge your stimulator, adjust programs, and we will look at your incision site and remove any stitches that you may have.

After implant with the Spinal Cord Stimulator Paddle:

- You will no longer be able to get MRIs. CT scans are OK.
- You will be given an identification card that has to be presented to security prior to going through any metal detector.
- You should never operate a motor vehicle with the stimulator device turned on, since it could impair your ability to control the foot pedals.

What are the risks of surgery?

The spinal cord stimulator paddle implant is a common surgical procedure, and while safe in expert hands, does have potential rare/infrequent risks, including:

- Infection
- Cerebrospinal fluid leak
- Difficulty with speech or swallowing
- Stroke or hemorrhage (very rare)
- Erosion of the connector
- Migration of paddle

Following your trial implant if you notice:

- Your trial leads have been pulled out
- Redness, swelling, drainage or foul odor from the surgical site
- Excessive bleeding
- Increase in pain at the surgical site

- Fever of 101°F or higher with any of the above symptoms

CALL THE OFFICE IMMEDIATELY OR, IF AFTER HOURS, PAGE THE OPERATOR TO SPEAK TO THE NEUROSURGEON ON CALL AT 919-681-8111

A representative from the spinal cord stimulator company is available for any questions. Support is available in all 50 states.

St. Jude Medical: 1-800-727-7846

Boston Scientific: 1-866-360-4747

Medtronic: 1-800-510-6735

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