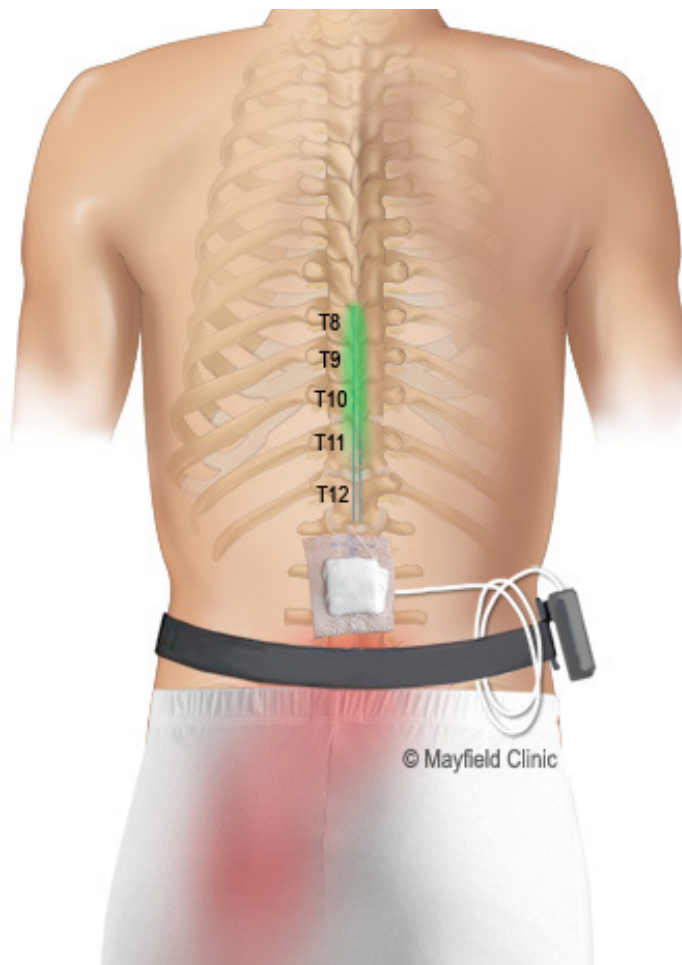


SPINAL CORD STIMULATOR

A spinal cord stimulator is a nonsurgical option for spinal pain that uses an implanted device to send low-wave electrical impulses directly to the spinal cord. Designed to relieve pain that isn't responding to other treatments, a spinal cord stimulator can help to restore quality of life without pain medication. However, it can also be used with other pain treatments.



CANDIDATES FOR A SPINAL CORD STIMULATOR

Anyone seeking a nonsurgical treatment for chronic pain can be a candidate for a spinal cord stimulator. A stimulator is recommended only after a patient has tried other pain therapies. Common reasons for getting a spinal cord stimulator include:

- Chronic back pain
- "Failed back syndrome" pain
- Arachnoiditis/spinal cord inflammation
- Untreatable heart pain (angina)
- Nerve-related pain related to diabetes, cancer, or surgery
- Complex pain syndrome
- Pain following amputation

Generally, a patient must be recommended for this procedure by a pain specialist in order for insurance to cover costs. Candidates must also be capable of safely undergoing implantation surgery. This involves caring for surgical wounds for up to 10 days.

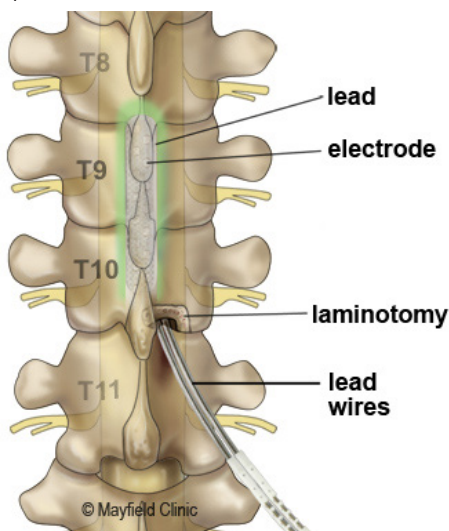
WHAT IS A SPINAL CORD STIMULATOR?

A spinal cord stimulator is an implantable device that consists of thin wires, called electrodes, that are connected to a small battery pack, called a generator. The device's electrodes are placed between the spinal cord and vertebrae. The generator is placed under the skin near either the abdomen or buttocks. Once a spinal cord stimulator is implanted, the patient is able to control the delivery of electrical impulses using an exterior remote control.

RESULTS OF A SPINAL CORD STIMULATOR

SPINAL CORD STIMULATOR

Once a spinal cord stimulator is implanted under the skin, pain sensations are replaced by sensations of minor tingling known as paresthesia. Some newer devices eliminate the sensation of paresthesia for patients who find it to be unpleasant. Many people find that they are able to go off of pain medications once a spinal cord stimulator is placed. This allows them to enjoy either pain-free or low-pain living without worries about side effects or dependence.

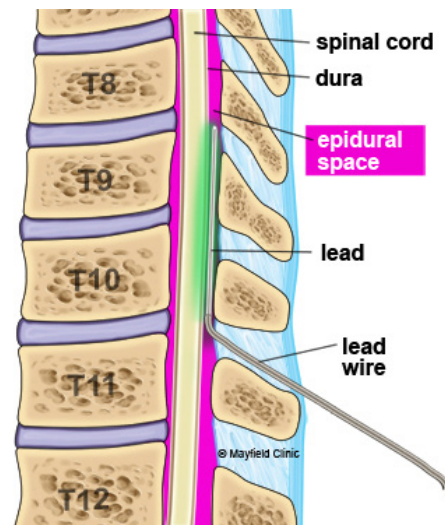


Some people actually use spinal cord stimulators as a type of "last resort" before agreeing to surgery. It's possible to temporarily use a spinal cord stimulator as part of a trial period. If the stimulator successfully eliminates pain, surgery may not be needed. However, patients who don't get the level of relief they're looking for can go on to schedule surgery.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS OF A SPINAL CORD STIMULATOR?

Implanting a spinal cord stimulator comes with a number of risks. Like all procedures that involve placing a device in your body,

stimulator placement comes with a risk for infection. It's also possible for hardware to move out of place, break or malfunction while in the body. While rare, permanent damage to nerves or spinal tissue is possible. Lastly, a stimulator failure can result in the need for an extraction surgery.



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