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**TENS INSTRUCTIONS**

**Reasons for using TENS**

TENS stands for Transcutaneous Electrical Nerve Stimulation. It is an effective means of minimizing pain without drugs. It is safe. non-addicting and can be used on a continuous basis.

**Why TENS Works**

There are several reasons why TENS is so effective. TENS has been documented to increase the production of pain killing chemicals your body naturally produces called *endorphins.* The TENS unit may also block the pain signal by flooding the nerve with a competing stimulus.

**Setting Up Your TENS Unit**

Make sure the battery is well charged and securely inserted into the unit. When the battery has a good charge, the light will go on when you turn the unit on.

Make sure the intensity dials are set to “off” and the unit lights are off before applying the unit.

Plug in the lead wires. Your therapist will show you how to use a single or a double lead. The “L” shaped end goes into the unit. Use the corresponding intensity dial for each lead; if the lead plugs into the space marked “1” then use the dial marked “1”.

Clean the skin where the electrode will sit with warm water and a towel—avoid using a smooth cloth since this will not be as effective in removing skin cells and oils. Attach the electrode to the lead. Wet the gel of the electrodes with water.

Place the electrode on the skin in the location that your therapist directed you to use. You may also wish to experiment with various electrode placements. Remember that the current will go from one electrode to the other. The farther apart you place the electrodes, the deeper the current. Conversely, the closer the electrodes, the shallower the current.

Your therapist will set the “rate” and “width” controls. Talk to your therapist if you want to consider changing these.

Turn on the unit. Set the intensity at:

\_\_\_\_\_The highest level possible without feeling discomfort (This may change as you use the unit. Often, as you get used to the sensation, you can turn it higher.)

\_\_\_\_\_Just to the point of a muscle contraction and then back off so the contraction ends.

You can sleep and work with the unit. It is often helpful to use the TENS unit in the same manner as you would take medication—only the TENS has no harmful side-effects.

Your unit may have choices about the type of stimulation. Usually the options are:

**C**= Constant Stimulation

**M**=Modulated (variable stimulation)

**B**=Burst stimulation (high level followed by lower levels and provided intermittently)

Your therapist will recommend a stimulation type for you. With the therapist’s permission, you may want to experiment with types of stimulation to find the one that is most effective for you.

**After Treatment**

Turn the intensity dials to “off” before removing the electrodes.

Remove the electrodes from you skin. Check you skin for irritation which is extremely rare. Let your therapist know if you experience any skin issues.

**Taking care of your TENS unit**

* Water and your TENS unit DO NOT go together. Do not shower or bathe while wearing the unit.
* The TENS unit runs on a 9 volt battery. When the battery becomes weak you might note that the unit lights will be dim or not light up. If this occurs, replace it with a fresh battery.
* When you remove the electrodes from your skin, place them on the plastic on which they came and then in the zip lock bag. Protect them from air.
* Be careful with the wires. These are fragile and may break and become ineffective if sharply bent.
* Keep the plastic guard over the intensity control on the top of the unit to prevent the controls from being moved while you use the unit.

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