EMORY PAIN CENTER

Peripheral Nerve Stimulator

What is a peripheral nerve stimulator? A peripheral nerve stimulator is a medical device used to manage chronic pain by delivering electrical stimulation to specific peripheral nerves. It is a small device implanted near the targeted nerve or nerves, and it provides mild electrical impulses that help interrupt pain signals to the brain, providing pain relief.

Why is a peripheral nerve stimulator used? A peripheral nerve stimulator is used to manage chronic pain that has not responded to other treatments, such as medications, physical therapy, or injections. It may be used for various conditions, including chronic back pain, neuropathic pain, complex regional pain syndrome (CRPS), and peripheral nerve injuries. The stimulator can help reduce pain, improve function, and enhance quality of life for individuals experiencing chronic pain.

How is a peripheral nerve stimulator implanted? The implantation of a peripheral nerve stimulator involves a surgical procedure. You will be placed under anesthesia, and a small incision will be made near the targeted nerve or nerves. The stimulator device, consisting of a generator and leads, will be implanted and secured in the desired location. The leads are connected to the generator, which is typically placed under the skin in a nearby location. The incision will be closed, and the generator settings will be programmed and adjusted by your healthcare provider.

How does a peripheral nerve stimulator work? Once the device is implanted, the peripheral nerve stimulator delivers electrical pulses to the targeted nerves. These pulses help disrupt or block pain signals from reaching the brain, providing pain relief. The stimulation settings can be adjusted to meet your specific needs and preferences. You will typically be provided with a remote control or programmer to turn the device on or off, adjust the stimulation intensity, and customize the stimulation pattern.

What are the side effects/risks of a peripheral nerve stimulator? Peripheral nerve stimulators are generally safe, but like any medical procedure, they carry some risks. Common side effects may include discomfort or pain at the implant site, infection, bleeding, or wound healing issues. In rare cases, there may be lead displacement, nerve damage, allergic reactions, or an inability to achieve adequate pain relief. It is important to discuss

any concerns or potential complications with your healthcare provider before undergoing the implantation procedure.

What should I expect after the implantation of a peripheral nerve stimulator? After the implantation, you will be given specific instructions regarding wound care, activity restrictions, and follow-up appointments. It may take some time to find the optimal stimulation settings that provide the best pain relief for you. You will work closely with your healthcare provider to adjust the stimulation parameters and ensure the device is effectively managing your pain. Regular follow-up visits will be scheduled to monitor the device's function and make any necessary adjustments.