



What is...

TENS?

Overview

Transcutaneous Electrical Nerve Stimulation (TENS) is a form of electrical therapy that can be helpful for pain management. Your doctor or health professional may decide to issue you a TENS setup to help decrease the pain you may be experiencing. This form of electrical current is very low (milliamps) and safe. If you have any concerns, discuss them with your health professional.

The TENS setup consists of a TENS unit, wire leads, electrodes, battery and charger, and carrying case. Your health professional or doctor will preset the settings.

Using TENS

Place the electrode pads on the skin surrounding the painful area. Most electrodes are self adhesive. To aid adhesion, it may help to prepare the area by removing any oil from the skin with alcohol.

Next, plug the wire leads to which the electrodes are attached into the TENS unit. Turn on the unit and increase the intensity of the electrical current until you feel a gentle tingling. At this point, you can clip the unit to your belt. Pain relief may begin very quickly or it may take several hours. The unit may be used for hours or days at a time. After a while you may feel reduced tingling, which is normal. Your nerves are "getting used to" the feeling. Although not necessary if you are continuing to get pain relief, it is all right to turn up the unit until you feel the tingling again.

Precautions

- Do not use TENS while bathing, showering, swimming or in water.
- Do not use TENS over your eyes.
- Do not use TENS if you have a pacemaker or history of heart attacks, unless approved by your doctor.
- Do not place electrodes over the front part of your neck.
- Do not use TENS if you are pregnant.
- Check skin periodically to ensure there is no allergic reaction to the self-adhesive pads or to the electric current.
- If you are using TENS on your legs or arms, you may not want to use while driving.

