Your temporary Sacral Nerve Stimulator (SNS) test wire has been inserted today. It is secured to your lower back by a see-through adhesive dressing, which **must not** be removed. If this dressing is removed, the wire will come out with it.

If the original dressing starts to curl at the edges, ask someone to place another dressing over the top. Don’t remove the old dressing. We will give you some additional dressings to take home.

You are likely to feel a bit sore after the procedure, especially when the local anaesthetic wears off, but this will settle in a day or two. Taking regular simple painkillers, such as paracetamol and/or ibuprofen, should help. If the area where the wire has been inserted becomes more painful or feels hot or inflamed, please contact the Pelvic Floor Team.

Tel: **01865 235 881**

At the weekends and after office hours, please contact your out of hours GP service or NHS 111.
About the equipment

Your temporary SNS wire is connected to a stimulator.

Stimulator

The stimulator is a small white box with a black button on the front. It will be placed in a belt and secured around your waist. The stimulator needs to remain connected to the white cable (which is attached to the wire in your back) during the entire two week test period.

You won’t be able to have a bath, shower or swim whilst the test wire is in place, as it is essential to keep the stimulator and the dressing on your back dry.

The stimulator has two new AAAA batteries inside. This size of battery is not readily available in shops. The batteries should last for the duration of your two week test period, but we will give you two spare batteries to take home, should you need to change them.

If you do not use the spare batteries, please remember to return them to the department when you come for your next appointment.
**Controller**

You will also be provided with a controller.

The controller allows you to turn the stimulator on and off (if necessary) and adjust the level of stimulation. You will be shown how to do this by your Senior Specialist Nurses and there are also instructions on page 7.

The only time you will need to turn the stimulator off is if you are driving. You do not need to turn it off if you are a passenger. If you do not drive you do not need to turn the stimulator off at all for the entire test period.

The controller uses AA batteries. We have put new batteries in today, which should last for the duration of your two week test period, but please make sure you have some spare ones in case they need changing.
Your test SNS wire will be turned on before you leave today. The level of stimulation will have been set so that you can not feel it. **This does not mean that it is not working.**

We will ask you to turn the stimulation up slightly twice a day for the next two weeks, to check that you can still feel the stimulation in a similar place as you did when it was put in (ideally anywhere within the bicycle seat area). We will show you how to do this.

You should then turn it down again to the point when you just stop feeling the stimulation. Do not worry too much about the numbers; we just want to make sure that you are still feeling the sensation in the right area. The ampage (power) may change a little during the two week period, as may the position/sensation of the stimulation you feel, but this is nothing to worry about.

Please contact the Pelvic Floor Team on 01865 235 881 if you do not feel anything at all when you turn up the stimulator as high as you can, or if the sensation has moved considerably from where you originally felt it (e.g. in your hip or high up in your buttock), or if you are experiencing any discomfort. There is no need to turn the stimulator off if this happens, but if you are in any discomfort turn the stimulation off using the instructions on page 8 until you can speak to one of the Senior Specialist Nurses for further advice.
How to use the controller

Your controller is turned on by unlocking it.

Press either the up or down arrow on the front of the controller. This will “wake up” the controller.

Gently press and hold the padlock symbol on the screen, until you see a circle of dots. The home screen will then appear. This is the screen with the image of the person and the numbers on the bottom left or right.

How to check your sensation

Unlock the controller. You will see the home screen with the image of a person and the numbers in the bottom left or right corner of the screen (which is the strength of the stimulation). Press the up arrow button on the front of the controller, to increase the level of stimulation until you can just feel it.

Now turn the stimulation down again, using the down arrow button on the controller, to just when you stop feeling it. This may be a different number than you were set up with.

When you are sure you can no longer feel the stimulation, lock the controller again by touching the padlock symbol at the top right of the screen.

Your controller is now locked. This turns the controller off, to save the life of the batteries and to prevent any accidental pressing of buttons.

Please repeat this test every morning and evening.
How to turn the stimulator off

You only need to do this if you are driving or if you are in discomfort.

• Press the grey button on the top right edge of your controller.
• On the screen of the controller touch ‘Stimulation off’.
• Press OK to confirm this.

How to turn stimulator back on (e.g. once you have finished driving):

• Press the grey button on the top right edge of the controller.
• Press the ‘Stimulation on’ button on the touch screen.
• Press OK on the touch screen.

Please note:

When you turn the stimulation back on, you will then have to turn up the stimulation to check your sensation (as instructed previously). The stimulation will have changed back to 0 when turned off.

If at any time you need to turn off the stimulation immediately and your controller is not available or not responding:

• Press and hold the black button on the white stimulator box. You will hear a click.
• Continue to hold the button down for 10 seconds.

You are very unlikely to need to do this.
Batteries

Your controller will tell you if the batteries in either the controller or the stimulator need replacing.

When you are using your controller you will see an image in the top left of the home screen of the controller and an indicator of how much life is left in the batteries. This battery sign will be green initially and will turn red if the batteries run out.

Next to this there is an image of a person with a battery indicator, which again will be green. This displays the battery life of the white stimulator.

We will show you in clinic how to change the batteries in both devices, if you need to.

General advice during your test phase

Whilst you have your test wire in place it is essential to avoid vigorous activity or sport. This includes bending and stretching. You are advised to also avoid sexual intercourse for the duration of the test phase. As a general rule, if you can feel the dressings on your back pulling, you are likely to be doing too much.

Please be careful when dressing and undressing. Pull your underwear or waistband clear of the dressings, to avoid disturbing them.

You can drive during the test phase, as long as the stimulator box is switched off for the duration of your journey. Remember to turn it back on and turn the stimulation back up when you have finished your journey.

We would like you to complete the bowel diaries we have given to you every day. Please bring them to your next appointment.
After the test phase

We will give you an appointment to have the wire removed after two weeks. This is a very quick and simple procedure. We will just peel off the dressings and gently pull the wire out. This takes less than 1 minute.

At this appointment we will look at your completed bowel diaries and discuss the outcome of your test. Please remember to bring the spare batteries given to you, if they have not been used.

If you have any concerns during your test phase, please contact the Pelvic Floor Senior Specialist Nurses.

Tel: 01865 235 881

Email: pelvicfloor.advice@ouh.nhs.uk

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If you have a specific requirement, need an interpreter, a document in Easy Read, another language, large print, Braille or audio version, please call 01865 221 473 or email PALSJR@ouh.nhs.uk

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