

Department of Neurosciences
John Radcliffe Hospital

Discharge advice for patients going home after the implantation of a Deep Brain Stimulator



This leaflet contains answers to some of the questions people most often ask when they go home. It is intended as a guide. If you have any specific queries that are not answered here, please discuss these with your nurse or doctor.

Going home

You may feel concerned about the thought of returning home after your operation. Hopefully during your stay with us your questions will have been answered. This leaflet has been designed by your nurses to give you support and guidelines about your recovery at home.

We feel it is important that you do not feel alone and isolated at home, so please call us if you need specific advice or support. Please contact the Surgical Movement Disorder Nurses on one of the following telephone numbers:

Tel: 01865 231 873

Tel: 01865 231 875

Tel: 01865 231 876

Or contact the ward on 01865 231 526.

Alternatively, your GP and Practice Nurse are there to help, as are the secretaries for your consultants and doctors at the hospital.

How do I look after my wounds?

Your stitches or staples need to be taken out on the 10-14th day after the operation. If you are still in hospital this may be done before you go home. If not, then you will need to make an appointment with the Practice Nurse to do this at your GP's surgery.

As your wound is already healing it does not need any special attention. When you are bathing, however, it is better to have a shower rather than a bath. This prevents the wound from becoming sodden (soaking wet), which can increase the risk of infection and delay healing.

You must contact the team at the hospital as a matter of urgency if you notice any of the following symptoms. They may mean that you have an infection which needs treatment with antibiotics:

- Any leakage from the wound. This may be brown, green, or clear.
- An increase in soreness or very bad itching around the wound that happens a few days after you have returned home.
- Redness or any swelling or pain at or around your wound site.
- Any fever/high temperature.

If this happens outside of normal office hours you must contact your GP who will be able to contact the Neurosurgical team at the hospital. If your GP surgery is closed they will have an 'out of hours' service that you can access.

How soon will I be getting back to normal?

As soon as the initial tiredness passes you can look forward to gradually getting back to normal. It is quite usual to feel very tired for the first couple of weeks and we advise you to take plenty of rest during the day. As you begin to feel less tired, you may want to do more as each day passes. There are no restrictions on doing things such as seeing friends, going shopping and travelling.

About the stimulator

You should have been given a booklet written by the company who made your stimulator. Please read it carefully. If there is anything that is not clear, do not hesitate to ask your nurse to contact a member of the Movement Disorder Team.

If you need any of the following procedures in the future please contact the Movement Disorder Team for advice:

- surgery
- x-rays
- scans
- invasive procedures (a procedure which might cause bleeding)
- dental treatment (which might involve ultrasonic probes).

This is because certain equipment cannot be used if you have deep brain stimulator implanted.

Now that you have a deep brain stimulator in place, you cannot have MRI scans due to safety reasons.

When you are out, you must remember to watch out for signs asking people with cardiac pacemakers to see a member of staff. This is because your neuro-stimulator works in a very similar way to cardiac pacemakers and there may be special precautions you need to take. We will tell you about these before you leave hospital and you will be given an identity card with details of your stimulator. Remember to carry this with you.

Will my medication be changed?

Every person responds differently to his or her medication and to this type of surgery. Your medication may be changed before you leave hospital. If so, a member of the Movement Disorder Team will discuss this with you. If you are unsure about the medication you should be taking please discuss this with us before you leave the ward. Once you get home, if you experience any symptoms that are unusual for you, please consult your GP or contact one of the Movement Disorder Nurses.

What about work?

How quickly you return to work depends on what you do for a job. You should discuss this with your doctor before you leave hospital. A period of 4-6 weeks off work is not unusual. If you need a Sickness Certificate please ask for this before you go home.

When can I resume sexual activity?

The simple answer to this is whenever you are ready. If you are unsure about how your medications affect any contraception you may be taking, please ask your GP or pharmacist for advice. The stimulator itself should have no effects on any method of contraception used.

Will I be able to drive?

We advise you not to drive for six weeks after your Deep Brain Stimulator operation. By law, you must inform the DVLA and your insurance company of your operation. They will tell you if there are any specific regulations or of changes to your policy after Deep Brain Stimulation.

What about complications?

You have already started on the road to a good recovery and we are confident that this should continue at home.

Sometimes, for whatever reason, people may develop post-operative complications or side effects from stimulation. Please see your GP or phone the ward if you experience:

- any different, worsening or sudden headache
- any neck stiffness, high temperature or pain when you look at light
- a rash
- lethargy or tiredness that doesn't improve
- any chest pain or calf pain
- fits/seizures or "funny turns"
- blurred vision or worsening vision
- drowsiness, confusion, or any weakness in your arms or legs
- any vivid dreams or hallucinations
- vomiting or feeling sick.

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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