

2015

Peripheral Nerve Evaluation (PNE)

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PNE is a test of sacral nerve stimulation to see if sacral nerve modulation could help with your bladder function.

What is sacral nerve modulation (SNM)?

Sacral nerve modulation (SNM) has been an approved treatment option in Canada since 1994.

This treatment can improve one or more symptoms such as:

- › Frequent trips to the bathroom during the day and night
- › Reduce urine (pee) leakage
- › Improved bladder emptying
- › Help with pain and pressure in the bladder area

If your doctor feels SNM may help you, you will be scheduled for test stimulation. The test stimulation is called peripheral nerve evaluation (PNE). It allows you to experience the effect of SNM at home over 3-7 days. Based on the results of the test stimulation, your doctor can determine if the SNM therapy system will help you. **In preparation for PNE, you MUST bring a 3 day voiding diary** (to keep track of when you pee) **with you on the day of the procedure.** It is important to note any leakage, pain, or use of incontinence pads (such as Tena® or Poise® pads) you had in the 3 days before the procedure. This history will help your doctor find out whether SNM is right for you.

What is the peripheral nerve evaluation (PNE) system like?

This system consists of a temporary lead (“lead”) (wire) through the skin into an existing hole in the sacrum (a bony plate near the end of your spine.) A small test stimulator will be clipped on the belt on your pants. This stimulator creates mild electrical pulses that are carried to the sacral nerve by the temporary lead.

While you wear this system for 3-7 days, you will use a voiding diary to write down how PNE affects your symptoms. At the end of the test, the lead is removed. Based on the results, you and your doctor will decide if SNM is the right choice for you.

The procedure

- Placing the lead will take 30-60 minutes, and you will return home on the same day. Most procedures are in the Outpatient Urology Clinic in the Halifax Infirmary, 4th level. A few may be scheduled at the Victoria General site.
- You can bring a family member or friend to provide support before the procedure.
- You will be asked to lie on your stomach with several pillows under your pelvic area (hips) to fully extend your lower back to ease placement of the lead. With your lower back and buttocks exposed, a small grounding pad will be taped to

your back, and it will stay there for the entire test. Your doctor will give you local anesthetic to numb a small area on your lower back.

- Next, a needle will be inserted (put) into your lower back to find the proper placement in the sacrum. When the needle is in place, the test is started, and your doctor will ask you to describe what you feel.
- You will feel a twitching or fluttering sensation in the area of the vagina or rectum (bum) (in women), and rectum or scrotum (in men). The feeling should not be painful.
- Your doctor will also check your response based on the muscle contraction in your buttocks (bum) or your big toe.
- Once the correct sacral nerve and responses have been confirmed, a temporary lead is inserted through the same needle.
- The lead will be taped to your skin and a transparent (clear) dressing will be put on, then the lead will be connected to the external stimulator.
- An X-ray will be taken to check the location of the lead.
- After confirming the correct position of the lead, your doctor or nurse will show you how to use the external stimulator. They will also tell you about the safety measures and activity restrictions related to the PNE.

During the PNE period

- You will be asked to continue to keep a voiding diary, usually starting the day after the procedure, for 3 days in a row.

Steps for a successful PNE:

- Don't drink more or less liquid than usual.
- Don't try to hold your urine. Allow your bladder to determine when it needs to be emptied (i.e. don't wait a long time to go to the bathroom). Holding urine will interfere with (work against) measuring the effect of the therapy.
- Void (pee) only when you feel the need to go. During PNE, void only when you feel the urge to urinate or when you sense that your bladder is full. This will help you get into a more regular voiding schedule.
- Write down each urination or leaking episode in the diary. **We need complete, accurate information to find out if SNM is right for you.**

Warnings:

- Do not have a shortwave diathermy (may result in serious injury or death).
- Turn the test stimulator off when you drive a car or use a power tool.
- This therapy is not intended for you if you have a mechanical obstruction (blockage) such as an enlarged prostate, cancer, or a urethral obstruction.

Caution:

- Call your doctor if you see any redness or swelling at the lead site. This could be a sign of infection.
- Avoid sex to make sure the PNE lead stays in position.
- Limit your physical activity to low or moderate levels.
- Take it easy during the PNE period: avoid bending, stretching, or lifting heavy objects.
- Avoid baths and showers. It's OK to take a sponge bath (you can wash your hair but use the kitchen sink so that you don't have to bend too much).
- If you see any of your healthcare providers during the PNE period, tell them that you have a PNE.
- Ask your doctor what to do if you feel a change in the stimulation. **It should never be painful.**
- If the PNE gets uncomfortable, turn it off, and then slowly turn it up again until you feel moderate stimulation.
- Call your doctor or nurse if you feel any sensation near the grounding pad. It may need to be checked to see if it has moved.

For more information, please contact:

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The information in this pamphlet is to be updated every 3 years.