



## Spinal Cord Stimulator Trial (STIM)

STIM is a procedure in which electrodes (through wires) that are placed within a small battery back act as an “activator” of the area between the vertebrae and the spine known as the epidural space. The goal is to provide longer lasting relief for patients that tend to have more chronic pain (Ex: Lower back, heart pain, spinal cord injuries, etc....).



This procedure is initiated with a small needle of anesthetic placed in area of pain and later have a layer of thin wire combines with electrodes that are inserted to target the source of pain and provide vital stimulation (pain relief). This process is repeated.

### What will I experience during my STIM Trial?

You'll likely experience a minor pinch when your provider injects the local anesthetic to numb the area before your RFA. During the STIM trial, you may feel the following:

- Pressure
- A burning sensation
- Tingling
- Soreness

If you have any discomfort during the STIM Trial, the intensity tends to dissipate over the course of a few days. However, taking rest is recommended due to possible irritation from the insertion of the electrodes.

### What should I expect after my STIM Trial?

After your procedure, you may feel some discomfort when your healthcare provider inserted the needle. This is normal and should last a few days (mild symptoms typically). Your provider may tell you to take it easy and minimize your activity level for the rest of the day. Your pain is expected to

significantly reduce after 2-3 days. However, soreness in the muscles near the site of the needle insertion may require additional rest and/or an ice pack. As such, strenuous physical activity (stretching, exercising) is discouraged for a few days after the procedure.

### **What are the side effects of the STIM Trial?**

Side effects of the STIM trial may include:

- Headaches when standing up, but are not as significant when sitting down (due to possible cerebral spinal fluid leakage)
- Infection at the site of the procedure (redness, swelling, general pain)
- **Numbness of limbs and progressing muscle weakness**
- **Sepsis and severe bodily infection**
- **Bolded symptoms please seek medical attention as soon as possible**

### **What are the advantages of the STIM Trial?**

The advantages of the STIM Trial include:

- May experience longer lasting pain (significant alternative to other treatment options)
- Different types of bodily pain are addressed by this treatment, including nerve pain, spine pain, as well as chest pain affected by the heart.
- Tends to reduce the need of constant chronic pain medications (opioids, etc...)
- Temporary option for pain relief if there is a major surgery impending.

### **What are the risks and possible complications of the STIM Trial?**

Due to the nature of this procedure, some risks include:

- Infection at the site of the procedure
- The inserted leads being moved out of the original position (not as common recently)
- The breaking of the electrode wires
- The pain relief gradually reduces over time

### **Is the STIM Trial covered by insurance?**

All medical plans are different in terms of what is a covered benefit, please check with your plan directly regarding covered services and patient eligibility and benefits.

- We will check with your insurance if authorization for this procedure is required. This does not mean it is a covered benefit; you will need to check with your insurance plan directly to confirm covered services and eligibility of benefits.