

WHAT TO EXPECT DURING TMS THERAPY

FIRST DAY – PERSONALIZING YOUR TMS TREATMENT

Today is the big day! You are starting TMS Therapy! You may be feeling scared, nervous, doubtful, excited. Whatever you are feeling is **NORMAL**. You are taking a huge step toward improving your mental health and your life.

This first session is when your provider will formulate your treatment plan, mapping the position of the coil to the point of focus on your skull. Every person's skull and brain are different, so this is where your provider fits the treatment specifically to your body. This session is divided into four parts. The first 3 parts have a lot of steps, but it takes less than 15 minutes.

- 1) **Find your treatment location.** First the provider will have you put on your treatment cap, which is like a cloth swim cap that fits snugly on your head. This allows the provider to mark your treatment location without drawing in permanent ink on your head! The provider will take several measurements of your head and then mark your treatment location based on those measurements.
- 2) **Find your dose of magnetic therapy.** Now the staff will have you rest your arm on the armrest so your elbow is bent and your hand is in the air with your fingers open but relaxed. The provider will gently rest the magnet on your head over the part of the brain that controls the opposite hand. The provider will give you single pulses of the magnet until we see your hand twitch. Once we see your hand move well, the provider will slowly decrease the strength of the pulses until we find the lowest strength of magnet that makes your hand twitch 5 out of 10 times. We mark this dose on your treatment cap as well as in your medical record. This is called your motor threshold, the smallest amount of pulse needed to cause your finger to twitch. It allows you and the TMS treatment staff to know that the pulse is working. This will feel similar to how your hand or leg can jerk before falling asleep.
- 3) **Get you comfortable in the treatment chair.** When the provider moves the chair into the treatment position (it will be reclined quite a bit), keep your back against the back of the chair. The provider will start moving the headrest to fit **YOUR** neck. You don't need to move your body to fit the chair. The provider will move the headrest up and down, then forward and backward. The provider will keep making little adjustments until you are comfortable.
- 4) **Your first TMS treatment.** The provider will now place the magnet over your treatment location. During the treatment, the magnet will pulse rapidly for four (4) seconds and rest for 26 seconds. This pattern repeats until you receive the number of pulses the provider has prescribed for you. The pulses feel like a strong tapping on your head. During the first set of pulses, you **MIGHT** feel pain in your eye, nose, cheek, or teeth. This pain comes from the magnetic field touching a part of the nerve for your face. If you feel this pain in your face, please tell us, and we will stop the magnet immediately, causing the pain to stop. The provider will start moving the magnet until you no longer have pain in your face. You will still feel the strong tapping on your head under the

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magnet. After we get you comfortable, we'll turn on a movie of your choice, and you just hang out and let the magnet do the work!

After your first treatment, you may have a dull headache for a couple of hours. You may take whatever medicine you normally take for a headache. You may go back to your regular activities as soon as treatment is finished.

FIRST 5 TREATMENTS (1ST WEEK)

Over the first 5 treatments, your brain will gradually get used to the magnetic pulses. Most people say that they barely feel the pulses by the end of the first 5 treatments. You won't notice any change in your mood yet. This process takes a while, so be patient. It is important that you come to your treatment every day. Your brain needs the daily reminder of how to function without all that daily depression, anxiety, etc.

SECOND 5 TREATMENTS (2ND WEEK)

The daily treatments continue to get easier, and you'll notice that the treatments go by faster every day. By the end of this week, your TMS treatment staff and your family might start to notice that you look a little better. Usually people become a little more talkative, walk a little taller, and look a little calmer. You may not feel any different. When you take your mood assessment this week, your score might be better, even though you don't feel any different. Your brain is starting to process the world differently, starting to think differently – so the way your brain answers the questions is different. You probably won't start to feel better until next week.

THIRD 5 TREATMENTS (3RD WEEK)

Many people begin to feel a little better by the end of this week of treatment. Hope for the future starts to creep back in, and life doesn't look so bleak. The changes in your mood may be very slight, but they are real. Remember that every person is different, so if you are not feeling any better yet, hang in there. The odds are in your favor that you will feel better soon. Keep coming to treatments every day and believe that the treatments are helping. Your TMS Treatment Staff are here to support you, so ask questions!

FOURTH 5 TREATMENTS (4TH WEEK)

Here's the tricky part. Even though you may have just started to feel better, you might start to feel worse again this week. Doctors don't know exactly why this happens. It might be the brain trying to work on its own, or trying to balance itself after all the changes the TMS is making in the mood pathways. Whatever the cause, most people do feel worse for a few days. The good news is that if you start to feel worse, it is a GOOD SIGN! People who start to feel better and then start to feel worse again almost always get significantly better at the end.

FIFTH 5 TREATMENTS (5TH WEEK)

This week your brain starts to get much stronger, and the improvement in your mood gets more secure. Most likely you will notice definite improvement in your mood. You may start to feel

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more like being with family and friends, sleeping better, concentrating better. It is important that you keep taking your usual medicines even though you are feeling better.

SIXTH 5 TREATMENTS (6TH WEEK)

You are in the home stretch! You may be feeling much more like your old self again. Your provider may adjust your medication doses if you are on several medications or are on very high doses of medications. You may start to feel worried about what happens at the end of treatment. See that section below!

TAPER OR ADDITIONAL TREATMENTS BEYOND WEEK 6

Our goal at APN Behavioral Healthcare is for every patient to reach remission. If you have reached remission and insurance is helping pay for your treatment, your provider may suggest doing a series of “taper treatments” over the next several weeks to gradually wean your brain from TMS. If you have not yet reached remission, and you have insurance coverage, your provider will have you continue treatment for the 6 additional treatments covered by insurance to do everything possible for you to reach remission from your mood disorder. If you are paying for your treatment yourself, your provider will make recommendations about continuing your treatment for a few more sessions to try to reach remission (see our financial policy for details about cost).

AFTER TMS THERAPY

The full benefit of TMS is often not felt until a month after therapy is over. Your provider at APN Behavioral Healthcare will see you weekly during TMS treatment to assess how you are doing. Your provider will also see you weekly after TMS treatment to monitor your responses. For the majority of people, the effects of TMS last a year or more with no further TMS treatments. For some people, depression, anxiety, etc., may start to creep back into their brain, causing them to start feeling worse again. **IF YOU NOTICE YOUR MOOD GETTING WORSE AGAIN, CALL US RIGHT AWAY!** The great news is that if TMS has worked for you once, it will more than likely work for you again. Often you only need a few treatments (10-15 and sometimes even less) to start feeling well again a second time around. Most insurance companies will approve another course of TMS when there is a new episode of mental health concerns and when TMS has already worked for you in the past.