

Spinal Cord Stimulator Trial

A temporary test of spinal cord stimulation before permanent implantation

What is a spinal cord stimulator trial?

A spinal cord stimulator (SCS) trial is a temporary test used to determine whether electrical stimulation can reduce chronic pain and improve function. One or more thin leads are placed through a needle into the epidural space under live X-ray guidance. The leads connect to an external trial device worn outside the body.

The trial lasts 5–7 days. The leads are then removed in the office at the end of the trial. No permanent generator is implanted during the trial.

THE GOAL

To learn whether spinal cord stimulation meaningfully reduces your usual pain, improves daily activity or sleep, and helps you rely less on pain medication before considering a permanent implant.

What should I evaluate during the trial?

- Your percentage of pain relief and which areas of pain improve.
- Changes in walking, standing, sitting, sleep, household tasks, work, and other meaningful activities.
- Any change in pain medication use and whether the stimulation feels comfortable.

A successful trial commonly means at least 50% pain relief and/or meaningful functional improvement, but the final decision is individualized.

Risks and possible side effects

Temporary soreness, bruising, muscle spasm, headache, uncomfortable stimulation, or a pain flare may occur. The leads can move, causing a change or loss of coverage.

Less common but important risks include infection, bleeding or epidural hematoma, spinal fluid leak, allergic reaction, nerve injury, new weakness or numbness, bowel or bladder dysfunction, retained lead fragment, seizure, paralysis, or other serious neurologic injury. Serious complications are uncommon.

BEFORE YOUR PROCEDURE

Preparing for the SCS Trial

Follow the individualized instructions from Renova Pain and the procedure facility

Blood thinners, aspirin, and NSAIDs

DO NOT GUESS SCS lead placement and removal are high bleeding-risk procedures. Do not stop or restart a prescribed medication on your own. Renova Pain will give you a medication-specific plan coordinated with the prescribing clinician.

- Tell us if you take aspirin, Plavix/clopidogrel, warfarin, Eliquis/apixaban, Xarelto/rivaroxaban, Pradaxa/dabigatran, Lovenox/enoxaparin, or any other blood thinner or antiplatelet medication.
- Do not take blood thinners, aspirin, or NSAIDs during the entire trial while the leads remain in place. NSAIDs include ibuprofen, naproxen, meloxicam, diclofenac, ketorolac, and celecoxib.
- Unless Renova Pain gives different instructions, these medications may be resumed 24 hours after the trial leads are removed—not 24 hours after lead placement.

GLP-1 medications for diabetes or weight loss

Examples include Ozempic®, Wegovy®, Mounjaro®, Zepbound®, Trulicity®, Victoza®, Saxenda®, Rybelsus® and similar drugs. Tell us your schedule, last dose, recent dose changes, and any nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, bloating, or constipation. Follow the anesthesia team's individualized instructions.

Tell us before the procedure

- Any infection, fever, antibiotics, open wound, rash near the procedure area, recent hospitalization, pregnancy or possible pregnancy, allergy, bleeding problem, new weakness or numbness, or major symptom change.
- A pacemaker, implantable cardioverter-defibrillator (ICD), cochlear implant, insulin pump, continuous glucose monitor, or other implanted electronic device.

Procedure-day checklist

- ☐ Follow the facility's fasting instructions. If sedated, arrange for a responsible adult to drive you home and remain available after discharge.
- ☐ Take only approved morning medications with a small sip of water. Ask specifically about insulin and other diabetes medications.
- ☐ Wear clean, loose clothing. Bring a photo ID and updated medication list. Complete any ordered labs or pre-procedure testing.

PLEASE CALL Contact us before the procedure if you are ill, started antibiotics, have an active infection, did not follow medication or fasting instructions, or have any new neurologic symptoms.

DURING YOUR TRIAL

Protect the Leads and Dressing

The leads must remain secure, clean, and dry until Renova Pain removes them

Dressing and bathing—very important

KEEP DRY

Keep the silk tape and the entire dressing clean and completely dry. Do not shower, bathe, swim, or use a hot tub during the trial. Take a sponge bath without getting the dressing wet.

- Do not remove, loosen, reinforce, or redress the silk tape or dressing yourself unless Renova Pain specifically instructs you to do so.
- If the dressing or silk tape accidentally gets wet, becomes loose, lifts at an edge, is soiled, or needs to be redressed for any reason, contact Renova Pain immediately.
- Do not pull, tug, disconnect, or handle the leads. Keep the external device and cables protected.

Activity restrictions

Avoid	Bending, twisting, stretching, reaching overhead, vigorous exercise, and sudden movements.
Lifting	Do not lift more than 5 pounds unless Renova Pain gives different instructions.
Driving	Do not drive with stimulation turned on. If sedated, do not drive for at least 24 hours.
Sleep	Sleep in a position that avoids pulling on the leads or pressure on the external device.
Device	Use only the settings taught by the representative. Do not change or disconnect equipment unless instructed.

Daily support and trial diary

- The device representative will call you daily to make sure you are doing well, review your pain relief and function, and help with approved programming adjustments.
- Record pain relief, activities, sleep, medication use, stimulation coverage, and any problems each day. Keep all scheduled follow-up and lead-removal appointments.

Call us immediately

Call for fever, chills, increasing redness, warmth, swelling, drainage, wet or loose dressing, severe or rapidly worsening back pain, severe headache, new numbness or weakness, difficulty walking, loss of stimulation coverage, or equipment problems.

EMERGENCY

Call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department for new paralysis, loss of bowel or bladder control, saddle numbness, rapidly progressive weakness, loss of consciousness, chest pain, or trouble breathing.

Do not restart blood thinners, aspirin, or NSAIDs until Renova Pain confirms the leads were removed safely; the usual plan is 24 hours after removal.