

Spinal Cord Stimulation — Trial, then Implant

A pacemaker for pain — always test-driven first

Step-by-step visual guide
Review with your care team

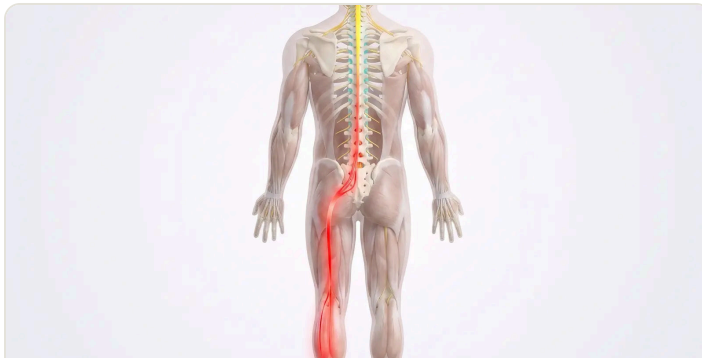
What it is: A spinal cord stimulator delivers gentle electrical pulses to the spinal cord that mask pain signals before they reach the brain. It is always tried first with temporary leads — no incision — so you can test the relief in your own daily life.

Often used for: Persistent nerve pain — after back surgery, from neuropathy, or complex regional pain — when conservative care hasn't been enough.

Trial ≈ 1 week

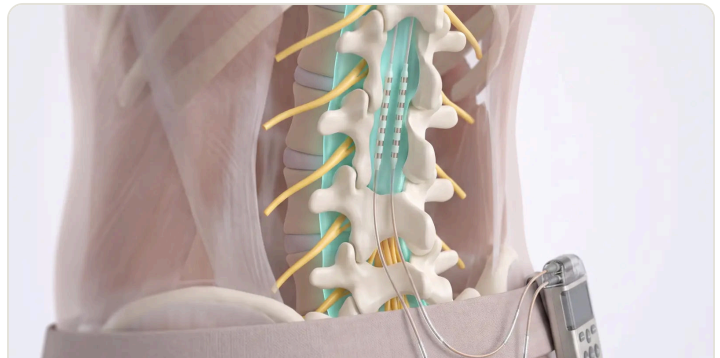
Reversible

You stay in control



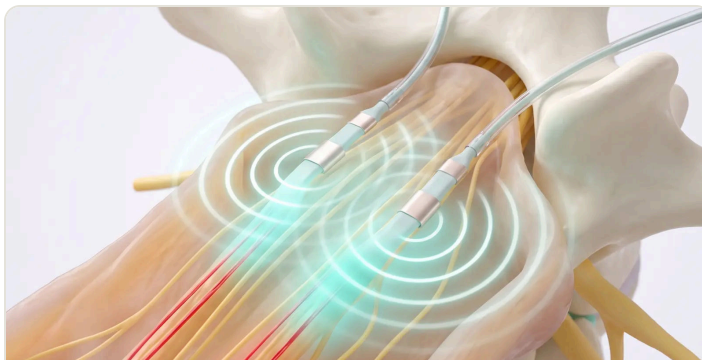
1 How pain travels

Chronic nerve pain travels from the body up the spinal cord to the brain (shown in red). If the message can be softened on the way up, the brain simply receives less pain.



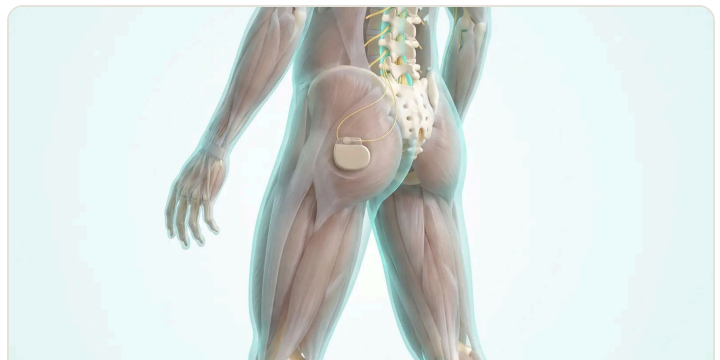
2 The trial — no incision

Through a needle, thin temporary leads are threaded into the epidural space over the spinal cord and connected to a small external stimulator worn on a belt. You go home the same day and live your normal week.



3 How it works

The leads deliver gentle electrical pulses that scramble or mask the ascending pain signal — many patients feel a soft tingling, or simply notice the pain fading into the background.



4 The implant

If the trial week gives meaningful relief — typically at least half your pain — a permanent system with a small battery under the skin, much like a pacemaker, can be implanted. You adjust it with a handheld remote, and it can be turned off or removed.

What to expect: The trial is the whole point: you judge the benefit yourself, at home, before any implant decision is made.

This handout is general patient-education material, not medical advice or a treatment recommendation. Illustrations are simplified artistic renderings, not exact anatomy. Benefits, risks, alternatives, and recovery vary by person — your physician will review the specifics of your situation, and you can ask questions at any time. Seek immediate care for fever, new weakness or numbness, loss of bladder or bowel control, or severe worsening pain.