

TENS For Non-Surgical Treatment Of The Cervical Herniated Disc

TENS is a term to describe using low current electricity to produce muscle stimulation. This is used for people with muscle spasms in the neck and pain which frequently is associated with a cervical herniated disc. Now, you can get a TENS unit, which is a portable unit to take home or it is used with a big machine when you go for your physical therapy or to the chiropractor or even with your acupuncturist.

This is a typical TENS unit; an industrial strength TENS unit.

It is an electrical stimulation unit. The difference why that even though this is a TENS, because it is transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation, no one in the clinic ever refers to this as a TENS unit. They always refer to the small portable unit as a TENS unit.

Que 1: This is ESTIM, electrostimulation, so let us see what it feels like? What is that, water?

Ans 1: Yeah, it is just water.

Que 2: They get stick?

Ans 2: We will go _____.

Que 3: So really as if you electrocute me, this will be a viral on youtube.

Ans 3: Although it is fun stuff, you know, I could teach you about the physics of electricity.

Que 4: I like learning about the physics, the electrodes _____.

Ans 4: Current density. Do you know about current density?

I am going to find out in a few minutes.

I _____ at Kings. My son used to love this. He had this portable unit.

Que 5: So this obviously would go on the neck. Where would you put them on the back?

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Ans 5: Well, yeah. You know, if we are doing the neck, we usually use the upper _____ and then cervical paraspinals, but smaller electrodes, so let us take you down. Now I am going to do this in a pulsing mode because it is more dramatic. You can see muscle twitching because you will start to feel and you can tell me as you start feeling something.

I feel a little something now, so I feel like a little, wow, wow, wow, _____ while.

The pain has taken over the hand and depending where we position.

I won't do this during surgery. I could crank that up and make a much stronger contraction. You know we can do this for pain relief, but we can also use this for muscle reeducation, like after a knee surgery, we put this on the quadriceps and you crank it up _____ contractions to help stimulate.

Que 6: People with cervical herniated disc are going to be in spasm, they are going to show up in spasm, does not this just give them more spasm?

Ans 6: No, because if you use this pulsing mode, it actually helps break it down.

Que 7: Oh, I see, so how long will they be sitting here with this?

Ans 7: 15 to 20 minutes.

Que 8: I see, so it feels very very slight tingle, that is all. And then all of a sudden, you noticed your....so, will they notice their muscles twitching in the neck and their arm?

Ans 8: Not always. Well, because it depends on the intensity and in a new herniated disc, I would not use this mode. It will be a little too aggressive, so they would see a more just a buzz, a steady buzz which is more relaxing. As they are less acute, we can get it deeper than into the muscle, that is when you use the pulsing mode as it is more comfortable.

So the bottom line in ESTIM is that it is not going to cure your cervical herniated disc, but it may help with the muscle spasm and certainly worth trying when you are seeing the chiropractor, acupuncturist, or physical therapist.

SLN/gisl/mjm/nat/051014/SLN20060-1

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