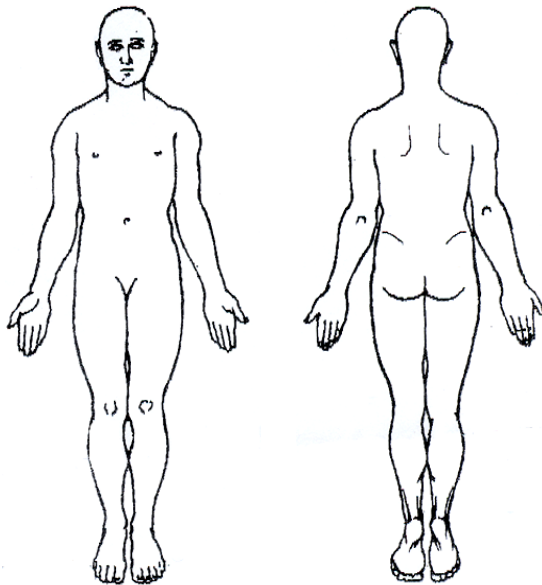


Use

- Start with 30 - 60 minutes initially then, if required, increase the time if there are no issues.
- If the intensity of the TENS fades during the treatment then turn the dial up until you can feel it again.
- Ensure the unit is switched off before you remove the electrode pads from your skin.

Positioning of the electrodes

Your physiotherapist will show you where to place the electrode pads. The larger electrode pads should be used (10 x 5cm) when placed on the low back in pregnancy.



Concerns and complaints

We aim to provide you with a high quality service at all times. However, if you have any concerns, complaints or comments about your experience of our service then please tell a member of the team or contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service on freephone 0800 328 7971.

If you need the information in another language or format please ask us

Nëse ky informacion ju nevojitet në një gjuhë apo format tjetër, ju lutem na kontaktoni

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اگر آپ کو یہ معلومات کسی دوسری زبان میں یا کسی دوسرے طریقے سے درکار ہیں تو براہ کرم ہم سے پوچھیں۔۔

Contact us

MSK Physiotherapy Administration Office
Telephone: 01865 904 978

Email: enquiries@oxfordhealth.nhs.uk
Website: www.oxfordhealth.nhs.uk

Information sourced from ACPWH guidance on the safe use of transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation (TENS) for musculoskeletal pain during pregnancy, Association of Chartered Physiotherapists in Women's Health (2012).



MSK physiotherapy

TENS in pregnancy

Transcutaneous electrical
nerve stimulation

What is TENS?

Transcutaneous electrical nerve simulation (TENS) is an electrical device which uses electrode sticky pads placed on the skin to deliver electrical impulses to nerves which lie underneath the skin surface.

Depending on the setting, TENS can be used to provide pain relief by either:

- blocking pain signals to the brain (Hi TENS), or
- by simulating the production of endorphins, the body's own pain-relieving mechanism (Lo TENS)

TENS in pregnancy

Modification of activities, supports, appropriate exercises and manual therapy should be the first treatment options to manage persisting low back pain or pelvic girdle pain. Where these interventions do not provide adequate symptom relief, TENS can be considered in preference to strong pain relief medication.

Contra-indications

TENS may not be suitable if you have a history of epilepsy, an irritable uterus, an history of early miscarriage, previous abortion

or if you have complications with the current pregnancy. Your physiotherapist will discuss this with you.

Precautions

- Do not place electrode pads on broken or inflamed skin.
- Do not place electrode pads on the hand, on the legs below the knees, on top of the shoulders, on the cheek or on the neck.
- Do not apply moisturiser to the skin where you are going to place the electrode pads prior to using the TENS machine.
- Do not use while operating vehicles or hazardous equipment. Use whilst driving may render insurance policies invalid.
- Keep out of reach of children.

Possible risks

If applied correctly, TENS can be used safely without any side effects to your baby. TENS should not be used over certain areas of the body which may induce labour contractions.

These areas include the web space of the thumb, all around the lower half of the leg and ankle and the top of the shoulders. If labour contractions are stimulated then

studies show that they will stop if the TENS machine is turned off again.

When to stop using TENS

In the unlikely event that you experience uterine contractions induced by the TENS machine, **switch the machine off immediately**. The contractions should stop. Please contact your physiotherapist as soon as possible.

Do not attempt using the TENS machine again until instructed by your physiotherapist. Always contact your GP, obstetrician or midwife if you have any concerns.

Check the skin where the electrode pads have been positioned as some people develop skin irritation with prolonged use. Monitor your skin regularly. If the skin is reddened, do not place the electrode pads on the affected skin until it is back to normal.

Monitor the sticky gel on the electrode pads. If this wears away, the pads will need replacing as this will cause the TENS sensation to be prickly and uncomfortable.