

## Discharge advice following insertion of Vagal Nerve Stimulator or battery replacement

This leaflet is for general advice following your discharge.

### Medication

It is important that you continue with your present medication; usually no alteration is made for the first 18 months, thereafter any changes will be made by your consultant or GP.

### Wound care

You will have one neck and one chest wound or one chest wound if you have had a battery replacement. The skin closures will either be dissolvable sutures or clips requiring removal.

These sites will be sore for a few days. If they become red, swollen, and more painful or if the wounds begin to discharge, contact your GP and epilepsy nurse at QEHB. Feeling numb around your wounds is normal and usually improves with time.

### Lifestyle

Following your discharge it is normal to feel more tired and lethargic.

Your throat will feel sore; this is due to the operation involving your vagal nerve.

You may also have discomfort in your shoulder/upper arm for a few days. You are the best judge of what you can and can't do, so be guided by how you feel and rest when tired.

If you require a sick note to cover your stay in hospital, please ask a member of staff before you leave the ward. You will need to remain off work for one week. Any further sick notes can be obtained from your GP.

It is best to avoid contact sports for three months; however, other activities may be resumed as you feel able.

You will notice a change in your voice and/or feel the need to clear your throat when the stimulator is initially switched on and each time during stimulation. You will usually be seen every two weeks after implantation until at therapy levels. This is to activate the stimulator, gradually increase the rate and monitor your seizures. You may be asked to keep a diary to give an idea of your seizure pattern.

Following battery replacement, your appointments will be less frequent. If you have any concerns following discharge you can contact Anna Leat, epilepsy surgery clinical nurse specialist on 07769 163677.

## Information for Patients

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If you have been given your magnet before discharge home, please bring it with you for your first appointment. If not you will be given one during your appointment.

The magnet must not be placed near mobile phones, computers or credit cards.

If you intend to go abroad or visit places where there will be security checks, we will issue you with a card, stating that you have the stimulator in place for medical reasons.

Your device's battery life is checked at every visit and may need to be replaced every three to five years. We may monitor you more closely when anticipating battery depletion.

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