A spinal cord stimulator (SCS) is a device, which delivers low voltage electrical stimulation to the spinal cord. The electrical stimulation to the spinal cord is delivered through one or two wires, which are carefully placed in the epidural space. The epidural space is a space adjacent to the spinal cord.

**Frequently asked Questions:**

1. **How does Spinal Cord Stimulation work?**
   The electrical signals sent by the spinal cord stimulator replace the sensation of pain with a tingling sensation.

2. **How is the procedure performed?**
   The spinal cord stimulator is implanted in two stages. The first stage is a trial and it is performed in the operating room with local anesthetic and intravenous sedation. In this stage, we place the wires through the skin, into the epidural space, which is adjacent to the spinal cord. Then the wires are connected to a stimulating generator. We leave the wires in place for 3 to 7 days. This is a test to determine if a permanent stimulating generator should be used.

   If the trial is successful, we place a permanent generator under the skin. The generator contains a battery. When the battery runs down it is replaced. Placement of the generator under the skin is done in the operating room and, after the procedure, the patient goes home. General anesthesia is not needed for the implantation of the spinal cord stimulator.

3. **What are the benefits of SCS?**
   The goal of the implantation is to reduce rather than eliminate pain. It might reduce the pain by 50 percent or more, it could increase the patient’s activity level and it might reduce the use of narcotic medications.
4. **Who is an appropriate candidate for SCS?**
   A patient with certain chronic pain conditions including: neuropathic pain, failed back surgery syndrome, complex regional pain syndrome, arachnoiditis, and certain types of vascular disease.

5. **What are the risks of the procedure?**
   Serious side effects and complications are uncommon. The most common problem is having pain at the site of insertion of the wires for a few days after implantation. The other complications are infection, bleeding, nerve injury, spinal cord injury, dural puncture or tear, and migration or breakage of the wire.

6. **Do I hear or feel the system inside me?**
   The spinal cord stimulator does not make any noise. It might be felt as a large lump under the skin which does not normally show through street clothes.

7. **What should I do if any problems develop after I leave the hospital?**
   Contact our office immediately. Our phone number can be found on the website below.

8. **Will I be able to control the spinal cord stimulator?**
   Yes

9. **What are restrictions after the implantation?**
   You should follow your physicians instructions for activity restrictions. During the first six weeks following the implantation, you will need to avoid lifting, bending, and twisting movements. You may be instructed to wear a back brace during this time period.

10. **Who should not have the procedure?**
    If you are on any medications that effect blood coagulation (Coumadin, Plavix, Ticlid) or if you have any active infection, you should not have the procedure without further discussion. You must also avoid certain medical procedures (e.g. Magnetic resonance imaging, MRI) and take special precautions with electronic systems and items that contain magnets.

For additional info and to watch informational videos on this procedure, please visit our website at: [www.mypainsolution.com](http://www.mypainsolution.com)

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