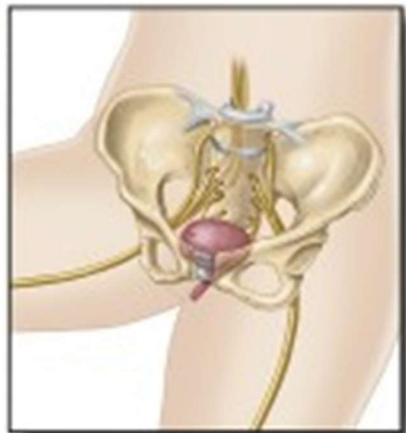


# Percutaneous Tibial Nerve Stimulation (PTNS)

Pelvic Health Physiotherapy Department  
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You have been referred to physiotherapy for treatment regarding your overactive bladder or bowel dysfunction. You will be seen by a Pelvic Health Physiotherapist in a one-to-one session prior to starting PTNS in order to assess your condition and start conservative treatment.

Conservative treatment methods include:

- Advice regarding lifestyle and dietary changes (i.e., reducing alcohol / caffeine / carbonated drink intake, increasing fluid / fibre intake, avoiding constipation)
- Ensuring you drink 1.5 - 2 litres of fluid a day
- Bladder / Bowel retraining where the time between toilet visits is gradually increased
- Supervised pelvic floor / anal sphincter muscle exercises which may include biofeedback or stimulation
- Medication (as advised by your doctor / consultant)

If conservative treatment is unsuccessful, PTNS may be trialed as a way of managing your symptoms.

## **What is PTNS?**

Percutaneous Tibial Nerve Stimulation (PTNS) is a form of neuromodulation that stimulates the group of nerves at the base of your spine (sacral plexus) that control your bladder and bowel. This is achieved through gentle electrical stimulation via a thin needle inserted into the skin at the inner ankle (near the tibial nerve). PTNS is a minimally invasive procedure that is carried out by your physiotherapist within the outpatient physiotherapy department.

## **How is the treatment carried out?**

You will be asked to sit on a chair / plinth with your legs well supported. Your physiotherapist will:

- Clean the inner ankle and arch of the foot on the leg to be treated
- Insert a thin, sterile needle above your inner ankle
- Attach a sticky electrode to the arch of your foot
- Connect the needle and electrode to the handheld PTNS machine via a lead
- Switch on the machine and turn up the intensity until the desired response is achieved (sensation in the foot / heel or involuntary flexion of the toes). If the sensation is too strong or you are uncomfortable, please let your physiotherapist know and the treatment can be adjusted.
- The treatment will then be started and will last 30 minutes.

## **What does it feel like?**

Because patients experience sensation in different ways, it's difficult to say what the treatment will feel like to you. Patients often describe the sensation as "tingling" or "pulsating" at or around the needle site which may travel into your heel or the sole of your foot/toes. Treatment is typically well-tolerated by patients. There are many different levels of stimulation, so your clinician will be able to adjust treatment to suit you as well as address any discomfort that you might experience during treatment.

## **Are there any risks?**

Potential side effects associated with PTNS treatments include:

- Discomfort or pain (including throbbing pain) near the stimulation site
- Redness / inflammation at or near the stimulation site
- Minor bleeding at the insertion site
- Toe numbness
- Stomach ache.

Treatment with the Urgent PC Neuromodulation System is contraindicated for individuals:

- With pacemakers or implantable defibrillators
- Prone to excessive bleeding
- With nerve damage that could impact either the percutaneous tibial nerve or pelvic floor function
- Women who are pregnant or planning to become pregnant during the duration of the treatment.

Please inform your physiotherapist of any changes to your health during treatment.

## **How long is the course of treatment?**

The initial treatment course consists of 12 consecutive, weekly or bi-weekly sessions lasting 30 minutes. You will be asked to complete a bladder/bowel diary and questionnaire before and after your course

of treatment to monitor whether the treatment is effective. If your symptoms are improving you will need to attend regular top-up sessions (frequency will be discussed with you and your physiotherapist).

You will be asked to regularly repeat the bladder/bowel diary and questionnaires during treatment to determine whether the treatment is effective. If you require long term treatment, you will be reviewed yearly by a Physiotherapist in a 1:1 appointment to ensure good pelvic floor muscle strength and technique and to review your overall progress. Please make sure you continue to book your follow up PTNS appointments when you attend clinic and to book your yearly 1:1 Physiotherapy review with any of the Pelvic Health Physiotherapy Team.

If you have any further questions please do not hesitate to ask your Physiotherapist.

## **How soon will I see results?**

Because PTNS gently modifies the signals to achieve bladder and bowel control, it usually takes 5-7 weeks for symptoms to change. However, patients respond at different rates. An overall response would be anticipated after 12 sessions of PTNS.

There is no way to anticipate who will respond earlier, later or not at all. That's why it is important to receive the 12 recommended treatments before you and your physician evaluate whether this therapy is an appropriate and effective choice for you.

## More information

If you would like to know more about overactive bladder / bowel dysfunction and the treatments available for it, you may like to try the following sources of information.

- Ask your GP.
- Ask the Doctor or Nurse at the hospital.
- Look at a website such as:
  - NHS at <https://www.nhs.uk/>
  - Patient UK at <https://patient.info/health>
  - International Urogynaecology Association (IUGA) patient information leaflet - Percutaneous Tibial Nerve Stimulation (PTNS) at [https://capelleurogyn.com/assets/pdf/patient\\_resources/P\\_TNS\\_IUGA.pdf](https://capelleurogyn.com/assets/pdf/patient_resources/P_TNS_IUGA.pdf)
  - [https://www.bladderandbowel.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/BBC034\\_PTNS.pdf](https://www.bladderandbowel.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/BBC034_PTNS.pdf)
- Patient information leaflets for your own hospital and others (usually available online)

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### Further Information

We endeavour to provide an excellent service at all times, but should you have any concerns please, in the first instance, raise these with the Senior Physiotherapist.

If they cannot resolve your concern, please contact our Patient Experience Team on 01932 723553 or email [asp-tr.patient.advice@nhs.net](mailto:asp-tr.patient.advice@nhs.net). If you remain concerned, the team can also advise upon how to make a formal complaint.

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Use the Relay UK app on your phone, tablet or PC.  
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Jeżeli chcemy, aby te informacje w innym języku, proszę zadzwonić 01932 723553

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