

tDCS

Some patients experience pain that do not respond to conventional treatments. A new therapy, Transcranial Direct Current Stimulation (tDCS), is an option to consider in these cases.

tDCS is a novel, painless approach for the treatment of chronic pain, including: reflex sympathetic dystrophy (Complex Regional Pain Syndrome Type I), causalgia (Complex Regional Pain Syndrome Type II), post-stroke pain, postherpetic neuralgia, other types of neuropathic pain, migraines, and fibromyalgia.

Currently, tDCS treatment is available either as a part of our tDCS research studies (for qualifying patients only), or as a clinical tDCS procedure to treat patients with chronic pain.

tDCS is a short and painless procedure. While you rest in a comfortable chair, two 2 x 2 inch electrodes are placed on your scalp for 20 minutes. The stimulation is repeated for five consecutive days, Monday to Friday. Each tDCS session takes about 40 minutes and includes stimulation and questions about medications and your pain level and after tDCS.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is tDCS?

tDCS is a new therapy in which an electrical current so low that it cannot be felt is passed through the skull to the brain below. The mechanism of tDCS is not clear but studies have shown that the current affects a variety of brain areas. It has been proposed that the current may reverse the abnormal brain excitability responsible for pain.

Who may benefit from tDCS?

Preliminary data suggest that patients with a variety of pain syndromes, including neuropathic pain, fibromyalgia and migraines, may benefit.

How is tDCS administered?

It is a painless procedure. While you rest in a comfortable chair, two 2x2 inch electrodes are placed on your scalp for 20 minutes. The stimulation will be repeated for five consecutive days.

Is tDCS reimbursed by insurance companies?

No, insurance companies, Medicaid and Medicare do not reimburse for this treatment. You will be charged for the procedure.

Will I have to stop my medications?

No, you can continue with your current medications.

What is the evidence that tDCS works?

There is early evidence that tDCS can help some patients with certain types of neuropathic pain. It has also been utilized successfully to treat a selected group of patients with migraines, fibromyalgia, depression and Parkinson's disease.

Is this treatment safe?

Many patients have been treated with this procedure and no side effects have been reported to date. There is no long-term experience as of yet.

Institute for Noninvasive Brain Stimulation of New York (INBSNY)

Department of Pain Medicine and Palliative Care

Beth Israel Medical Center,

Phillips Ambulatory Care Center

10 Union Square East, New York, NY 10003

212-844-8539