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## To the Patient: About Electrotherapy

One of the treatments you will be receiving is called “electrotherapy”. Channelling therapeutic electrical current through muscle, nerve, and connective tissue for the purpose of reducing pain has been a widely accepted medical practice for many years.



Your therapist may use electrotherapy for the purpose of providing relief from chronic, intractable and/or acute post-traumatic pain, as well as for relaxation of muscle spasm, prevention or retardation of disuse atrophy, increasing local blood circulation, muscle re-education, immediate postsurgical stimulation of calf muscles to prevent venous thrombosis, and maintaining or increasing range of motion.

Your doctor or therapist has chosen an electrotherapy device manufactured by Excel. This unit is the most advanced device of its kind currently available and is safe and comfortable. If for any reason you become uncomfortable, simply press the STOP button on the front of the machine and the machine will shut off.

Electrotherapy is introduced into the body at the injury site through the use of electrodes. Once the electrodes have been placed on the skin, the therapist will slowly increase the output intensity. Initially, you will feel a tingling sensation. The intensity will be increased until you notify the therapist the current is beginning to feel uncomfortable. The intensity will then be slightly reduced to ensure that the treatment is given at a pleasant level. To put it simply, electrotherapy need not be painful to be beneficial. Since your body has a tendency to adapt to the electrical current after the first couple of minutes, it may be necessary to periodically increase the intensity during the treatment period. The length of treatment may last anywhere from 10 to 20 minutes, depending on the condition being treated.

It is important to understand that electrotherapy is not a cure-all. Occasionally, it may be the only therapy prescribed; but more often it is used in conjunction with other therapeutic and rehabilitative treatments.

Your doctor or therapist will determine when electrotherapy is indicated, how often it should be used, and the length of each application. The exact frequency of treatment depends upon the individual patient and the conditions being treated. Generally, periodic treatments are continued as long as the condition is present. Treatments may be given as often as once a day in acute or serious conditions. In less serious cases, two to three times a week is common early in the treatment program with a gradual reduction in frequency as the patient improves. To receive maximum benefit from your electrotherapy treatments, it is important to follow the recommendations and instructions of your doctor or therapist as precisely and completely as possible.

Your doctor or therapist can provide you with a list of contraindications, warnings, precautions, and possible adverse reactions.

**If you are being treated in an area where you lack feeling or have decreased sensation of touch, be sure to inform your therapist before treatment is started. Extra care must be used when treating such areas.**