PATIENT BROCHURE · GARDEN STATE MEDICAL CENTER

InterStim & Axonics sacral neuromodulation

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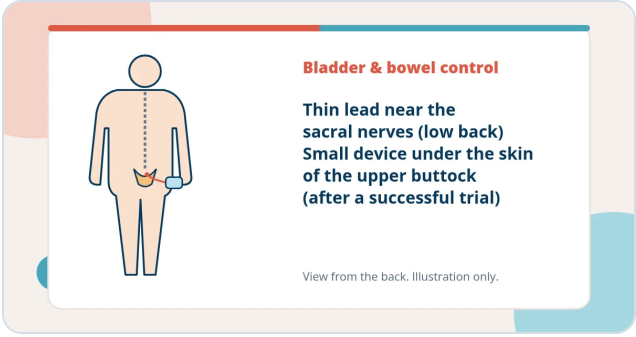
Sacral neuromodulation (also called sacral nerve stimulation, or SNM) is a therapy for bladder and bowel control. GSMC offers systems from two manufacturers: InterStim™ (Medtronic) and Axonics™ (Boston Scientific). The sacral nerves, in the lowest part of the spine, carry signals between the brain and the bladder, bowel and pelvic floor. When those signals are out of sync, the result can be sudden urges, leaking, trouble emptying the bladder or bowel leakage. A small system sends mild electrical pulses to these nerves to help restore more normal communication. Samir Jani evaluate patients for this therapy and perform the minimally invasive implant procedure. Because you test it first, you and your physician can see how your symptoms respond before deciding on a long-term device.



At GSMC: all GSMC providers evaluate patients and help decide which options may fit, at any of our 7 offices. Results vary.

Who it may help

Sacral neuromodulation may be an option for adults with:

- **Overactive bladder and urge incontinence:** strong, sudden urges, going very often, or leaking before you reach the bathroom
- **Non-obstructive urinary retention:** trouble emptying the bladder when nothing is physically blocking it
- **Fecal (bowel) incontinence:** accidental leakage of stool or gas

It is usually considered when diet and fluid changes, bladder training, pelvic floor therapy or medicines have not helped enough or caused side effects. Your history, exam and tests help decide whether it fits you. Some people are referred by their urologist, urogynecologist, colorectal specialist or primary care physician.

Recovery

- Soreness at the small incisions is common for several days.
- Keep dressings clean and dry as instructed.
- Avoid heavy lifting, bending and strenuous activity for several weeks so the lead can settle. Most people return to light daily activities within a few days.
- Depending on the device you choose, it may need regular recharging or may be recharge-free (see device options above). Battery replacement may eventually be needed, which is a shorter outpatient procedure.

Your physician will give you written instructions that may differ from these general guidelines. Our sacral neuromodulation patient guide covers diaries, the trial week, incision care and using the programmer.

Risks

Every procedure has risks. These include pain or discomfort at the device or lead site, lead movement, infection, unwanted stimulation or changes in bladder or bowel function, device problems and the need for another procedure. Your physician will review the risks and benefits with you.

Other options

Other options may include fluid and diet changes, bladder training, pelvic floor physical therapy, medicines, tibial neuromodulation , bladder Botox injections performed by a urologist, or other approaches recommended by your specialist.

Questions people ask

What are InterStim™ and Axonics™? They are two brands of sacral neuromodulation system: InterStim™ is made by Medtronic, and Axonics™ is made by Axonics, now part of Boston Scientific. GSMC offers both. In each, a thin lead placed near the sacral nerves in the low back sends mild electrical pulses that help the brain and the bladder or bowel communicate more normally.

Can I try it before getting the implant? Yes. Every patient starts with an evaluation (trial) period of several days up to about two weeks. You keep a symptom diary, and we review the results together before deciding on a long-term device.

Does it hurt? Most people feel a mild tingling or pulling in the pelvic area, if they feel anything. The settings can be adjusted if the feeling is uncomfortable.

Can I have an MRI? Current InterStim™ and Axonics™ systems are labeled MR-conditional for 1.5T and 3T full-body scans, which means many people can have MRI scans when specific conditions are met. The conditions differ by device. Always tell the imaging center about your device and bring your ID card. We will confirm what applies to your system.

Insurance and cost

GSMC participates with all Aetna plans, including Aetna HMO, and many other plans. Coverage depends on your plan and may need prior authorization. Our team checks your benefits before treatment.

When to call us: fever or chills; redness, swelling or drainage where a needle or device was placed; new or worse pain, numbness or weakness. **Call 911** for chest pain, trouble breathing, or sudden loss of bladder or bowel control.

Call 732-202-3000

One number for all 7 GSMC offices:

Toms River · 1314 Hooper Ave, 1st Floor
Brick · 1608 NJ-88, Suite 102
Whiting · 1100 NJ-70, Entrance B
Barnegat · 249 S Main St, Suite 5
Manahawkin · 1109 Beacon Ave
Freehold · 322 Professional View Dr, 300 Bldg, 2nd Fl
West Long Branch · 100 NJ-36, Suite 1K

gsmedicalcenter.org/treatments/interstim-sacral-neuromodulation/

General information, not medical advice. Individual results vary, and no outcome can be promised. Illustration is simplified and not to scale. Brand names belong to their owners; GSMC is not affiliated with any manufacturer.