

# GET THE FACTS ABOUT NEUROMODULATION



## MYTHS

VS

## FACTS



**Neuromodulation is a new area of medicine.**



Actually, neuromodulation has been around since the 1960s. But the field has changed a lot over the decades, and each year, new devices—and updates to existing devices—are developed.



**Neuromodulation just masks pain, it doesn't treat it.**



Neuromodulation interrupts or blocks pain signals from reaching the brain, so in a sense, it does “mask the pain.” However, over time, neuromodulation can help restore normal pain-inhibition pathways that may have been lost as the result of long-term, debilitating pain.



**Neuromodulation is only used for pain relief.**



Neuromodulation has a wide range of applications besides pain, including treating Parkinson's disease and other movement disorders, mental health disorders, epilepsy, gastrointestinal issues, bone growth, spinal cord injuries, and more.



**I need a prescription to access neuromodulation.**



Many external neuromodulation devices can be purchased without a prescription, though they may not be covered by insurance. Implanted or internal devices, on the other hand, require a clinician's approval and prior authorization.



**All medical devices go through the same FDA approval process.**



The FDA classifies devices in three categories based on their risk. Only devices in category III (which involve surgery or implantation) must get premarket approval and demonstrate with “sufficient, valid scientific evidence” that the devices are “safe and effective for their intended uses.”



**Spinal cord stimulators (SCS) are only for spine pain.**



SCS can be used for most conditions that involve nerve-related pain, for example, complex regional pain syndrome and post-amputation pain. There are several variations of SCS therapy, including combination therapy SCS, high-frequency SCS, and burst SCS.



**SCS is the only type of implanted pain relief.**



In fact, there are a few kinds, including peripheral nerve stimulation, dorsal root ganglion stimulation, and intrathecal drug delivery systems. Additionally, some stimulation types, like vagus nerve stimulation, can be external or implanted. Implanted devices involve surgery, which means they do come with risks.

Learn about a full range of pain management options at [uspainfoundation.org](http://uspainfoundation.org).



For citations, visit <http://bit.ly/neuromodsources>. This resource was created through support from Boston Scientific and Abbott. U.S. Pain Foundation developed the content without review from sponsors. This information is educational only and should not be used as a substitute for advice from a health care professional.