

Vagus Nerve Stimulation (VNS) Therapy

For Patients with Seizures & Epilepsy

How do I know if I need VNS Therapy?

VNS Therapy is used for patients that suffer from epilepsy and seizures. Most of the time, epilepsy and seizures can be treated with medication. However, some medications can create a financial burden on patients, due to the amount of medications needed to treat a patient's seizures. Patients can also suffer from adverse side effects from the medication. VNS Therapy can sometimes eliminate the need for medications altogether, or it can cut down on the number of medications needed, helping to offset costs and side effects.

What is Vagus Nerve Stimulation (VNS) Therapy? How does it work?

During a VNS Therapy procedure, Dr. Paul inserts a pacemaker-like generator/battery and electrodes, which look like a long wire with coiling on the end. Two small incisions are made, one in the patient's neck (to gain access to the vagus nerve), and one in the chest (to place the battery). The battery is inserted underneath the skin on either side of the chest. The wire is then threaded from the neck to the battery in the chest. Then, Dr. Paul carefully wraps the silicone-coated electrodes around the patient's vagus nerve.

What happens after surgery?

After surgery, the patient's VNS device will need to be programmed. After this is done, the patient receives the VNS therapy in two ways. You will receive automatic stimulation through the device. Most patients receive a "dose" for thirty seconds, and then a five minute period of no stimulation. Another way to use the VNS therapy is through self-activation. Most patients can sense a seizure about to happen. In this case, the patient, family member, or caregiver, can pass a magnet (given to you after surgery) over the patient's chest where the battery is located. This provides extra and on-demand stimulation.

During the activation of the VNS Therapy device, most patient symptoms include: a slight tickle feeling in the throat or a hoarse sounding voice.

**For more information about Vagus Nerve Stimulation Therapy, please consult our office. Dr. Paul and his staff would be happy to answer any questions you may have. **