

# Transcutaneous neuromuscular electrical stimulation for oropharyngeal dysphagia in adults

Information for the public

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Evidence on transcutaneous neuromuscular electrical stimulation shows there are no concerns about the safety of this procedure. There is not much good evidence about how well this procedure works for adults with dysphagia after they have had a stroke. This procedure can be used but only when patients are having regular checks to see how well it is working or if it has caused problems. This is because of the concerns about its long-term effects.

For adults who have dysphagia that has not been caused by a stroke, this procedure can only be done as part of a research study. This is because there is not enough evidence to be sure how well it works.

Oropharyngeal dysphagia is when people have difficulty starting to swallow. It can cause coughing, choking and a sense of food being stuck. This procedure involves electrically stimulating nerves in the throat or neck using electrodes placed on the skin, while the person swallows. The aim is to strengthen the muscles involved in swallowing.

The [NHS website](#) may be a good place to find out more. NICE's information on [interventional procedures guidance](#) has more about what a procedure is and how we assess them.

## Is this procedure right for me?

If you've been offered this procedure, your healthcare professionals should discuss with you what is involved, and explain the research study, and tell you about the risks and benefits. They should talk with you about your options, and listen carefully to your views and concerns. Your family can be involved too, if you wish. All of this should happen before you agree (consent) to have the procedure and to be in the study. You should also be told how to find more information about the procedure. Read more about [making decisions about your care](#).

## Some questions to think about

- What does the procedure involve?
- What are the possible benefits? How likely am I to get them?
- What are the risks or side effects? How likely are they?
- What happens if the procedure doesn't work or something goes wrong?
- What happens if I don't want the procedure? Are there other treatments available?

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