

**SELECT HEALTH NETWORK, INC.
PHYSICIAN PRACTICE GUIDELINES**

**SUBJECT: Transcutaneous Electrical Nerve
Stimulators (TENS)**

Date Issued: 10/06

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1/18, 1/19, 1/20, 1/21**

Sources: DeSantana et al., Carr Rheumatol Rep 2008, 10:492-9
Dubinsky and Miyasaki, Neurology 2010, 74:173-6
American Academy of Pain Medicine, Chronic Pain Medical Treatment
Guidelines 2007

- I. General Guidelines:
- A. A TENS unit is a device which utilizes electrical current delivered through electrodes placed on the surface of the skin over the peripheral nerve to be stimulated.
 - B. The TENS unit decreases a patient's perception of pain by inhibiting the transmission of afferent pain nerve impulses and/or stimulating release of endorphins.
 - C. All TENS unit requests require prior authorization to establish medical necessity, assess for case management intervention and assure utilization of network providers when available.
 - D. Indications for a TENS unit, at least one of the following:
 - 1. Chronic intractable pain associated with a neuropathy or radiculopathy
 - 2. Documented failure to control chronic intractable pain with other conservative measures.
 - 3. Acute postoperative pain limited to 30 days from the day of surgery.
 - 4. Dysmenorrhea
 - E. Examples of conditions for which a TENS unit is not considered medically necessary are (not all-inclusive) as follows:
 - 1. Headache, except migraines
 - 2. Visceral abdominal pain
 - 3. Pelvic pain, except dysmenorrhea
 - 4. Temporomandibular pain (TMJ)
 - 5. Osteoarthritis of the knee
 - F. Rental of a TENS unit is appropriate for no less than 30 days and not to exceed 60 days.
 - G. Purchase will be determined upon receipt from the ordering physician:
 - 1. Documentation that the patient will likely derive significant therapeutic benefit from continuous use of the unit over a long period of time.
 - 2. Following a rental period of no less than 30 days.
 - 3. Documentation of patient compliance.