

For more information, call the Urology Clinic:

- > Phone: 902-473-4186
- > Hours: 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday to Friday

Peripheral Nerve Evaluation (PNE)

This pamphlet is for educational purposes only. It is not intended to replace the advice or professional judgment of a health care provider. The information may not apply to all situations. If you have any questions, please ask your health care provider.

Find all patient education resources here:
www.nshealth.ca/patient-education-resources

Connect with a registered nurse in Nova Scotia any time:
Call 811 or visit: <https://811.novascotia.ca>

Prepared by: Urology Clinic, QE II
Designed and Managed by: Library Services

WJ85-0536 © March 2026 Nova Scotia Health Authority
To be reviewed March 2029 or sooner, if needed.
Learn more: <https://library.nshealth.ca/patient-education-resources>

Urologist: _____

Clinic phone: _____

Peripheral Nerve Evaluation (PNE)

Peripheral nerve evaluation (PNE) is a test to check if sacral neuromodulation can help with how well your bladder and/or bowel works.

What is sacral neuromodulation (SNM)?

- **SNM** uses electrical impulses to stimulate the nerves that control your bladder and bowel.
 - › A small neurostimulator (battery) and a wire are put under the skin in your lower back.
 - › The neurostimulator sends an electrical impulse to the wire to ‘reset’ the abnormal communication between your brain and your bladder or bowel.

- SNM can help with:

- › **Overactive bladder** (urinating [peeing] often during the day and night)
- › Urine (pee) leakage (called **urgency urinary incontinence**)
- › Emptying your bladder fully
- › Pain and pressure in the bladder area
- › Stool (poop) leakage (called **fecal incontinence**)

- Take it easy while you are wearing the test stimulator.
 - › Limit your physical activity to low or moderate levels.
 - › **Do not** bend, stretch, or lift anything heavier than 20 pounds.
 - **Do not** have sex. This is to help make sure the lead stays in place.
 - **Do not** have a bath or a shower. It is OK to take a sponge bath. You can wash your hair, but use the kitchen sink so that you do not have to bend a lot.

If you see any health care providers while you are wearing the test stimulator, tell them that you are having PNE.

Call your doctor or nurse if you:

- › Feel a change in the stimulation.
- › **It should never hurt. If the stimulation is not comfortable**, turn the test stimulator off. Then slowly turn it up again until you feel moderate stimulation.
- › Feel any sensation near the grounding pad. They may need to check if it has moved.
- › Have any redness or swelling where the lead enters your skin. This could be a sign of infection.

- Then your doctor or nurse will show you how to use the test stimulator, including safety measures and activity restrictions.

While you are using the test stimulator:

- **Do not** drink more or less fluids than usual.
- You will be asked to keep track of when you urinate for 3 days in a row. This usually starts the day after the lead is put in.
 - › Write down each time you urinate or leak urine.
 - › If you catheterize yourself, write down the number of times you catheterize and how much urine you drain from your bladder.
- **It is important to write down this information correctly so we can find out if SNM is right for you.**

Warnings:

- Turn the test stimulator off when you drive or use a power tool.
- **Do not** have any procedure that uses cautery (a procedure to burn a part of the body).

- If your doctor thinks SNM may help you, you will get an appointment for a test stimulation. The test stimulation is called **peripheral nerve evaluation (PNE)**.

What is PNE?

- PNE is a test that lets you feel the effects of SNM at home. The test is done over 3 to 7 days. Based on your test results, you and your doctor will decide together if SNM is right for you.

How does PNE work?

- Your doctor will make an incision (cut) in your skin near your sacrum (the bony area above your tailbone). They will put a temporary wire (called a **lead**) through the incision.
- You will be asked to wear a belt with a small test stimulator for 7 days (1 week).
- The test stimulator will send mild electrical pulses through the lead to the sacral nerve.
- You will be able to control the test stimulator with a cell phone device that you will get at your appointment. The nurses will show you how to use the device.

- While you are wearing the test stimulator, you will write down how it affects your symptoms.
- At the end of the test, your doctor will take out the lead. This will take about 1 minute. It will not cause any pain.

How do I get ready for my PNE appointment?

- Tell your doctor if you have a mechanical blockage (like an enlarged prostate, cancer, or a urethral blockage).

For 3 days before your appointment:

- **You must write down when you urinate. Bring this information with you to your appointment.**
 - › It is important to note any leakage, use of incontinence pads, or pain.

This will help your doctor find out if SNM is right for you.

Where do I go for my appointment?

Outpatient Urology Clinic
 Halifax Infirmary
 1796 Summer Street, 4th floor
 Halifax, NS

How is the lead put in?

- Placing the lead will take 15 to 20 minutes. You will be able to leave the hospital on the same day.
- You can bring a support person with you to your appointment.
- You will be asked to lie on your stomach with several pillows under your hips.
- We will tape a small grounding pad to your back. This is for safety. The grounding pad will stay on while you are wearing the test stimulator.
- Your doctor will give you local anesthetic (freezing) to numb a small area of your lower back.
- Then they will put a needle in your lower back. When the needle is in place, they will start the test and ask you what you feel.
- You will have a twitching or fluttering feeling near your vagina, anus (bum), or scrotum. **This should not hurt.**
- Your doctor will then put a lead through the needle. They will then take out the needle.
- They will tape the lead to your skin and connect it to the test stimulator.
- They will take an X-ray to make sure the lead is in the right place.