

Vagus nerve stimulator (VNS)

Discharge instructions

Normal after VNS surgery

2 small incisions

Your child will have 1 neck incision and 1 small incision either below the collarbone on the chest wall or in the armpit.

- Puffiness around the incisions is normal.
- We cover the incisions with an occlusive glue that will slowly wear off.
- Stitches under the skin will dissolve and do not need to be removed.

Low-grade fever

Your child may have a fever lower than 101°F (degrees Fahrenheit) or 38.3°C (degrees Celsius).

What to do at home

Generally, all children go home the same day that we place the VNS.

Shower

It is okay to shower the day after surgery. Do not let the incisions get under the water until cleared by your doctor.

Activities

Depending on the incision site, your child can return to normal their activities within a few weeks.



No PE, sports, climbing, or playing rough until your doctor tells you it is okay.

VNS stimulation

The VNS starts working immediately after surgery. We will turn the cardiac capture on at your first neurology visit. We use a very low setting.

During VNS stimulation, there is a small chance that your child may have:

- Changes in their tone of voice
- Hoarseness or coughing
- Trouble swallowing
- Discomfort



Vagus nerve stimulator magnet

Using the magnet

You may use the magnet after your doctor's appointment. The VNS system delivers stimulation automatically. It cycles between off and on.

Give extra stimulation when seizure coming on

You can use the magnet to deliver extra electronic stimulation when your child feels a seizure coming on. This extra stimulation:

- Occasionally stops a seizure.
- Shortens the seizure.
- Reduces the recovery time.
- Reduces the need for rescue medicine.

Turn stimulation off

You can use the magnet to turn the programmed stimulation off for a short time. This may be helpful:

- While eating, if the stimulation makes swallowing difficult.
- If your child experiences pain or unusual discomfort.
- If your child will be talking in front of groups of people.

When to call your neurosurgeon

Doctor's name: _____

Incision

- Area around incision becomes red.
- Yellow drainage is coming from incision.

Fever

- Fever higher than 101°F or 38.3°C.
- Fever lasting longer than 48 to 72 hours past surgery.

When to call your neurologist

Doctor's name: _____

VNS device

Call for any questions or concerns about the stimulator's operation or effects such as:

- Device becomes uncomfortable.
- Seems to be coming on too often.
- Stimulation stops working.

Child feels different

- Your child has problems with swallowing or sleeping.
- A small child who cannot talk starts acting "different" than usual.

Breathing

Call if your child has pauses in their breathing. This is called sleep apnea.



If you have questions about the magnets and how to use them, please refer to your VNS booklet.

Neurosciences

For locations and contacts visit:

cookchildrens.org/services/neurosciences/

or



These instructions are only general guidelines. Your healthcare provider may give you special instructions. If you have questions or concerns, please call your healthcare provider.