

Deep Brain Stimulation (DBS)

Deep brain stimulation (DBS) is a treatment option for people with Parkinson's disease (PD) who have symptoms that cannot be adequately controlled with medication. It is also used for the treatment of dystonic tremor and essential tremor (ET).

DBS involves surgically implanting a small device, similar to a pacemaker, into the brain. The device delivers electrical impulses to specific areas of the brain that control movement, helping to alleviate the motor symptoms of PD, such as tremors, stiffness, and difficulty with coordination or the tremor in ET.

Before the procedure, you will undergo a series of evaluations, including imaging scans, psychological assessments and neurological exams, to determine if you are a good candidate for DBS.

During the procedure, you will be given anaesthesia, and a surgeon will make a small incision in your scalp to insert the electrodes into the targeted area of the brain. The electrodes will be connected to a small device, which will be implanted in your chest or abdomen. After the procedure, you will need to stay in the hospital for a few days to recover and have the device programmed.

DBS is not a cure for PD, and it is important to continue taking medications as prescribed. However, DBS can help to reduce the symptoms of PD and improve quality of life. In ET it is possible for DBS to replace the need for medications, but some patients may still require them.

It is important to follow up regularly with your healthcare team to monitor the effectiveness of the treatment and adjust the device settings as needed.

As with any surgical procedure, there are risks associated with DBS, including infection, bleeding, and complications from the anaesthesia. There may also be side effects associated with the stimulation, such as speech problems or changes in mood or behaviour. Your healthcare team will discuss the risks and benefits of DBS with you in detail before the procedure.

DBS can be an effective treatment option for people with PD and ET who have not been able to control their symptoms with medication alone. It is important to work closely with your specialist to determine if DBS is right for you and to closely monitor your symptoms and adjust your treatment plan as needed.