

Percutaneous Tibial Nerve Stimulation (PTNS)

Patient Information · Gentle nerve stimulation at the ankle for overactive bladder

WARWIKI

PTNS is a drug-free, office treatment for an **overactive bladder** — urgency, frequent trips, and urge leakage. A very thin needle near the ankle delivers mild electrical pulses to the **tibial nerve**, which shares a pathway with the nerves that control the bladder. Over a series of sessions, this calms the bladder signals.

How It Works

The tibial nerve, near the inner ankle, connects up to the same spinal nerves that run the bladder. Gently stimulating it sends signals that **retrain and calm** the bladder's overactivity — reducing urgency and how often you go. There are no medicines and no whole-body side effects.

Is It Right for Me?

- A good option when lifestyle changes aren't enough and you want to **avoid medicines** (or they caused side effects)
- Drug-free — useful if you can't take bladder medicines
- Requires a **commitment to repeat sessions** to work and to keep working

LEARN THE TERMS

Overactive bladder

Urgency and frequent urination from the bladder squeezing too soon.

Tibial nerve

A nerve near the ankle that links to the bladder's nerve supply.

Neuromodulation

Using gentle electrical signals to calm overactive nerves.

Percutaneous

Through the skin — via a fine needle electrode.

Maintenance

Occasional follow-up sessions to keep the benefit.

WILL IT HURT? Most people feel only a mild tingling, a pulsing, or a gentle curling of the toes — not pain. Each session lasts about **30 minutes** while you sit comfortably, and you can drive yourself home and return to normal activity right away.

What Happens

- 1 You sit with your leg supported; a **very thin needle electrode** is placed near the inner ankle.
- 2 A small device delivers **gentle pulses** for about 30 minutes.
- 3 The needle is removed — there’s nothing left in place between visits.

The Schedule

- Usually **one session a week for 12 weeks** to start.
- Most people who respond then continue **occasional maintenance** sessions to hold the benefit.
- An **implantable** tibial-nerve device is also available at some centers for longer-term, at-home stimulation.

Good to Know

- Give it the **full 12 weeks** — benefit builds over the course.
- No medicines, no surgery, and no recovery time.
- It needs ongoing sessions; benefit can fade if you stop.

Call your team if you have:

- Redness, swelling, or drainage at the ankle site
- A fever, or significant ankle pain after a session
- Your bladder symptoms suddenly worsen

THREE THINGS TO REMEMBER

1. PTNS calms an overactive bladder with gentle nerve stimulation at the ankle — drug-free, with no whole-body side effects.
2. It’s typically weekly for 12 weeks, then maintenance sessions; each visit is ~30 minutes and painless.
3. Give it the full course, and plan for ongoing maintenance to keep the benefit.