

Frequently asked questions

Are there any side effects?

Some patients have localised discomfort over the site of the magnetic stimulation due to the pulsing effect of the magnet. This usually settles with time or simple analgesia such as Panadol. Disposable earplugs are available for those concerned about the noise.

Is TMS the same as Electroconvulsive Therapy (ECT)?

No, TMS is not the same as ECT. ECT is a treatment for depression that involves the use of electricity to produce a seizure under anaesthetic. TMS does not use anaesthetic nor does it produce a seizure.

Are there immediate effects of TMS?

Some people feel tired after each treatment though this differs from person to person. Some people report an improvement in their night sleep during the course of treatment.

What to I need to bring to hospital?

- GP referral
- Medicare card
- All current medication
- Any current pathology results
- Comfortable clothing
- Music if desired

Please do not bring any valuables to hospital.



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Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation (TMS)

Information for patients, carers,
family and support persons



Community
of Care

 **The Geelong Clinic**
by Healthscope

What is Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation? (TMS)

Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation (TMS) is a technology that is being developed as a new treatment tool for depression and a number of other disorders.

TMS is a procedure that involves the focused application of a magnetic field to superficial regions of the brain, changing the activity level of cells in the stimulated areas. During a TMS procedure, an electrical current passes through a small coil placed close to the scalp, this current induces a magnetic field.

The magnetic field is applied in pulses that can pass into an area of the brain using a pulsing magnet placed on the scalp.

The magnet is designed to deliver a focused beam of magnetic energy to stimulate electrical activity in nerves below the coil, causing them to fire. This changes the brain's electrical activity and the chemicals involved in controlling mood.

TMS in Depression

Studies have been evaluating the role of TMS in depression for over 20 years. These studies have shown that TMS can relieve the symptoms of depression in a proportion of individuals suffering from this condition. It is possible that it acts by changing activity in areas of the brain that are abnormally active in patients with depression.

TMS treatment has progressively become more available in clinical practice. It has been available in Canada for a number of years and was licensed in the USA in 2008. More recently, TMS Treatment has been approved for use in Australia by the TGA (Therapeutic Goods Administration). TMS is also endorsed by the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists.

Who can have TMS?

TMS is available to patients with depression and a history of poor response to, or an inability to tolerate the side effects of antidepressant medications. It is also available to patients who have had a previous positive response to TMS at this or other facilities.

As TMS involves magnetic energy, there are some people who are unable to have TMS.

Exclusions include:

- Cardiac pacemakers/ defibrillators
- Previous head/ brain surgery
- Cochlear implants
- Brain aneurysm clips
- Previous seizures, fits or epilepsy
- Pregnancy
- Neurostimulator/ biostimulator
- Significant neurological disorders such as brain tumours, Cerebral Lupus, Multiple Sclerosis (MS), Parkinson's Disease etc.)

People with dental filling or braces are able to receive TMS. A Safety Checklist will need to be completed and signed prior to commencing TMS.

TMS at The Geelong Clinic

You will be seated in a comfortable chair during treatment. There are no medications administered and you will be fully conscious and responsive. The TMS operator will rest the magnet over the appropriate area of the scalp and activate the magnet. During treatment, you may speak with the operator, rest or meditate, listen to music or watch TV.

You will need to remove metal hair clips and refrain from using any hair product. Hearing aids and glasses are also removed during treatment.

Each treatment session takes approximately 30 to 40 minutes. For the initial course of TMS patients usually have 20 sessions of TMS over two to four weeks. TMS treatment is generally very well tolerated and appears to be free of major side-effects. This treatment can be provided to inpatients at The Geelong Clinic only.

Fees, charges and health insurance

The Geelong Clinic is a preferred hospital and has contractual arrangements with most major health funds and regulators of compensation which include The Department of Veterans Affairs, WorkSafe and Transport Accident Commission.

The Patient Services Staff at The Geelong Clinic will confirm health insurance entitlements and advise patients and their families, where possible prior to admission of any out of pocket expenses. They will also co-ordinate approval requirements for admissions supported by compensation like WorkSafe. Patients who are not privately insured should speak with Patient Services Staff who will advise them of the fees.

Our Patient Services Staff will be pleased to answer any questions you may have in relation to cost. Please call us on 03 5240 0741 to discuss your options.

Referral process

If you are interested in having TMS, your Psychiatrist can discuss with you whether this is a suitable treatment option. From there, a referral can be made to the TMS Team at The Geelong Clinic so you can be formally assessed.

If you do not have a psychiatrist, a referral from your GP requesting an initial consultation with one of our Psychiatrists should be your first step.

GP referrals addressed to 'Dear Doctor' or a psychiatrist of your choice, can be faxed to 03 5240 0799.