

Neuromuscular Electrical Stimulation (NMES) in Dysphagia Treatment

What Is Neuromuscular Electrical Stimulation (NMES)?

Neuromuscular electrical stimulation (NMES) is a treatment for dysphagia — a term we use to describe swallowing disorders. NMES uses a low-level electric current to activate muscles used for feeding and swallowing. NMES is noninvasive: We place electrodes on the skin of the neck and/or face, over the muscles used for chewing and swallowing. Our therapists use NMES, along with traditional treatments, to improve a child's swallowing and feeding skills.

How Will My Child Be Assessed?

- Before treatment, your therapist may require a videofluoroscopy swallow study to check your child's swallowing skills and determine the type and severity of the dysphagia.
- We will use the study's results to determine your child's goals and the frequency of NMES treatment.
- After treatment, your speech and language pathologist and/or your occupational therapist might request a follow-up videofluoroscopy to measure possible improvements in your child's swallowing.

What Is the VitalStim® Treatment?

VitalStim® is a type of NMES we use specifically for treating the swallowing muscles.

- The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has approved VitalStim® to be safe.
- The only side effect the FDA reports is occasional redness on the skin where the electrodes were placed.

Who Provides This Treatment?

You might receive treatment from a speech and language pathologist and/or an occupational therapist. Both are certified to use VitalStim®.

What Can I Do Now?

Talk to your doctor. For your child to receive NMES, your doctor must write an order for dysphagia assessment and treatment, with consideration of NMES for swallowing.



A speech and language pathologist or an occupational therapist can use neuromuscular electrical stimulation (NMES) with your child.



We place electrodes on the neck and/or face, then use a low-level electric current to activate muscles used for feeding and swallowing.

Make An Appointment

[651-290-8707](tel:651-290-8707)

Refer a Patient

[651-325-2200](tel:651-325-2200)

This information is for educational purposes only. It is not intended to replace the advice of your health care providers. If you have any questions, talk with your doctor or others on your health care team.

If you are a Gillette patient with urgent questions or concerns, please contact Telehealth Nursing at [651-229-3890](tel:651-229-3890).