

Patient information factsheet

gammaCore

We have written this factsheet as a guide to using gammaCore to help prevent and treat cluster headaches. We hope it helps to answer some of the questions you may have. If you have any further questions or concerns, please speak to a member of your healthcare team.

What is a cluster headache?

A cluster headache is a severe headache that is always on one side of the head and lasts for 15 minutes to three hours. It is usually associated with:

- redness and watering of the eye on that side
- a blocked or running nose
- feeling restless.

A cluster headache can happen multiple times a day and can continue for weeks or months.

What is gammaCore?

gammaCore is a handheld, self-administered device which gently electrically stimulates the vagus nerve (the nerve running from the brain to the abdomen) through the skin in the neck.

Medical research trials show that it can provide relief from the symptoms of cluster headaches.

It is a relatively safe treatment with few side effects.

It is not currently approved for use on the NHS in the UK for any other headache disorder.

How do I use gammaCore?

We suggest watching the gammaCore instruction video which you can find online here:

www.gammacore.com/how-to-use-gammacore

You can also find further information in the leaflet provided with the device. This includes safety information, cleaning instructions and instructions for use. You can download this leaflet here:

www.gammacore.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/gammaCore-Sapphire-SLC-IFU.pdf

1. Find the correct treatment location on either side of your neck (see links above).
2. Apply a small (pea-sized) amount of the supplied gel to both stimulation surfaces of the gammaCore device.
3. Turn the gammaCore device on (see guides) and position it on your neck.
4. Adjust the intensity level to what is right for you.
5. After two minutes, the gammaCore device will beep twice and automatically discontinue stimulation.

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One treatment is defined as three consecutive two-minute stimulations (see instructions below for frequency). The length of each stimulation provides a sufficient amount of time for you to:

- correctly position the gammaCore device
- set the appropriate intensity level

You may apply this stimulation treatment to either side of your neck.

When should I use gammaCore?

For preventive treatment of cluster headaches

Give yourself two treatments a day (one in the morning and one at night), with each treatment consisting of three two-minute gammaCore stimulations.

For acute treatment of episodic cluster headaches

For each cluster headache attack, you may give yourself two treatments, three minutes apart as follows:

- At the earliest sign of pain, give yourself a treatment consisting of three two-minute gammaCore stimulations. After completing the third stimulation, you should wait three minutes. If you still have pain, apply three more two-minute stimulations.

You may treat up to four attacks per day, with two treatments each time. This may be given in addition to the twice daily preventive treatments, if needed. **You should not exceed a total maximum of 30 two-minute stimulations per day.**

Is gammaCore suitable for everyone?

You should **not** use gammaCore if you:

- have an active implantable medical device (for example, a pacemaker, hearing aid implant, or any other implanted electronic device)
- have an open wound, rash, infection, swelling, cut, sore, drug patch, or surgical scar(s) on your neck at the treatment location
- are using another electrical device at the same time (for example, a TENS unit, muscle stimulator, or portable electronic device such as a mobile phone)
- are driving, operating machinery, or doing any activity that may put you at risk of injury
- are near microwave, magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), radio frequency surgical, or computer-aided tomography machines
- have wet skin, are in water (for example, a shower, bath or pool), or have just stepped out of water

For more safety information, please read the leaflet provided with your device.

What are the possible side effects?

The most common side effects associated with gammaCore are:

- application site discomfort
- application site irritation or redness
- local pain in the face, head and/or neck area (including toothache)
- muscle twitching and/or contractions in the face, head and/or neck area (including facial droop and lip pull)
- headache or migraine
- dizziness
- tingling, pricking, or a feeling of 'pins and needles' on the skin where the device is applied

These side effects typically resolve immediately after the stimulation is complete.

Are there any risks or complications?

The following risks and complications have been associated with other vagus nerve stimulation (VNS) devices and may potentially occur with gammaCore:

- coughing
- gastrointestinal symptoms such as stomach discomfort or feeling sick
- headache
- hoarseness or change in voice
- irregular heart beat (arrhythmia)
- light-headedness or dizziness
- metallic taste in mouth
- muscle twitching and/or contractions of head, neck and/or face
- pain
- shortness of breath (dyspnea)
- skin irritation
- tingling, pricking, or a feeling of 'pins and needles' (paresthesia or dysesthesia)

Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact us.

Neurology admin

Email: neurologyadmin@uhs.nhs.uk

Please include the name of your doctor in your email.

Alternatively, you can contact your doctor's secretary directly using the details they have given you.

Useful links

www.nhs.uk/conditions/cluster-headaches

www.gammacore.co.uk

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For help preparing for your visit, arranging an interpreter or accessing the hospital, please visit **www.uhs.nhs.uk/additionalsupport**