

## **Treating back and leg pain with Neurostimulation**

*The following story tells the experience of one person who is receiving neurostimulation for the treatment of back and leg pain. As you read it, please bear in mind that the experience is specific to this particular person. Results vary, not every response is the same. (Not all treatment options are applicable to your type of pain.)*

### **'Slow down you move too fast!'**

*'Slow down you move too fast' is what Don Gaskell's wife now says to him since he was implanted with a neurostimulation system from Medtronic. During the past thirteen years though, this was not always the case. Don has suffered severe shoulder, back and leg pain preventing him from leading the full and active life he had always been used to.*

When Don took early retirement in 1988 he was looking forward to a well-earned rest, but like many active people he soon got bored and set about building his own house. About twelve months after completing the house build, Don found that he was unable to enjoy one of his great passions – reading. Just lying in bed with a book became very uncomfortable, with the pain spreading across his left shoulder. A visit to the GP diagnosed frozen shoulder and the suspicion of spinal involvement causing the debilitating pain Don was suffering.

A referral to hospital and investigative x rays and scans led to Don having to undergo surgery to have his left shoulder replaced. “I was shocked to hear that I needed to have this type of surgery and said to the doctor that he better be well insured because if this doesn't work I shall take him to the cleaners!” said Don. Fortunately there was no need for litigation and all was well for about two years, but in 1992 Don started to experience pain in the shoulder again and more investigations revealed an abscess in the shoulder socket, which required further surgery. This seemed to do the trick and Don recovered well from his exhaustive round of medical investigations and surgeries.

Don and his wife continued to enjoy their retirement, going on overseas holidays and cruises, but in 1996 the spinal pain struck once more and Don found it difficult to walk without the aid of a stick. So, once more Don was to have to undergo surgery – this time a spinal fusion procedure, which was successful for about twelve months, but then the pain returned. A visit to a pain consultant was organised. Injections and pain control followed and this helped, but did not fully alleviate the pain and disability Don was experiencing. “I've never been a person that likes to take pills or medication of any kind for that matter and at this point I was taking up to 20 tablets – some to control the pain

and others to counteract the side effects. Another referral to yet another physician was made and the decision was taken to implant Don with a neurostimulation system. From the outset this provided Don with a tremendous amount of relief from the agonising pain he was experiencing. He could now do just about everything he could before the pains first started over ten years previously.

Since the neurostimulation system was implanted in November 2000, Don has experienced another attack of breakthrough pain, but injections have helped. "I couldn't do without the neurostimulator, it really does help me an enormous amount. My wife keeps telling me to slow down and I have to remind her that for the past ten years she had been saying come on speed up!"