

## COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### **What is TENS?**

Transcutaneous Electrical Nerve Stimulation (TENS) works by delivering an electrical stimulus through the skin and into the peripheral nervous system. A portable TENS unit generates the low level electrical current. The lead wires carry the stimulus to conductive patches (electrodes) placed on the skin.

### **How does a TENS unit work?**

Transcutaneous Electrical Nerve Stimulation (TENS) is a form of electrotherapy which makes possible, with continuous depolarization, the blocking of pain transmission in nerve paths. The pain-reducing effect of this form of therapy is accomplished by placing electrodes, through which an alternating current is conducted, on the area of pain. The current continues through the body and reaches the pain-transmitting nerve paths. Nerve fibers are blocked and the transmission of pain information to the brain is therefore interrupted. By changing the frequency of the alternating current a fast-acting and/or long-lasting pain reduction can be achieved.

### **When is a TENS unit prescribed?**

Indications for TENS include the symptomatic relief and management of chronic, intractable pain and as an adjunctive treatment for post-surgical and post-trauma acute pain.

### **Who can't use a TENS unit?**

TENS should not be used until the cause of the pain is known. TENS units can affect the operation of implanted electronic devices. Please contact your health practitioner before initiating treatment with a TENS unit.