

Repetitive Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation (rTMS)

 Information
Booklet for Patients
& Carers



1. Introduction: What is rTMS?

Repetitive Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation (rTMS) is a non-invasive procedure using magnetic pulses to target and stimulate specific brain areas. This treatment aims to relieve symptoms of treatment-resistant depression by activating or calming brain circuits associated with these conditions. At St John of God Hospital, our rTMS service is provided as part of our comprehensive, consultant-led outpatient care model, ensuring an integrated approach to your mental health journey.

2. Who Can Benefit from rTMS?

This treatment is available to patients experiencing treatment-resistant depression that has not responded to traditional therapies such as medication or psychotherapy. To qualify, you need to be referred by your doctor or psychiatrist, who will continue to oversee your care in collaboration with our rTMS team throughout your treatment.

Recovery Rates

Research indicates that rTMS is associated with substantial recovery rates for resistant-treatment depression. Studies report that 50% of patients experience symptom relief, often observable within the first few weeks of treatment.¹

1. Carpenter LL, Janicak PG, Aaronson ST, et al. Transcranial magnetic stimulation (TMS) for major depression: a multisite, naturalistic, observational study of acute treatment outcomes in clinical practice. *Depress Anxiety*. 2012;29(7):587-596. doi:10.1002/da.21969



3. How Does rTMS Work?

rTMS works by inducing ‘neuroplasticity,’ the brain’s ability to form new neural connections. For treatment-resistant depression (TRD), we stimulate the left prefrontal cortex to restore function and alleviate symptoms. In cases of depression with agitation or anxiety symptoms, a protocol targeting the right prefrontal cortex to reduce its overactivity may also be used. Both treatments can be delivered in one session, depending on the patient’s needs.





4. Treatment Process

- **First Appointment:** You'll meet our specialist team for an initial assessment, where we confirm your suitability for rTMS. If agreed, we will ask you to sign a consent form and complete some baseline questionnaires.
- **Subsequent Sessions:** Sessions typically last around 30 minutes and are held daily (Monday to Friday) for 4–6 weeks. Most patients can return to their daily activities immediately after treatment.
- **Aftercare:** After your initial treatment period, we will schedule a follow-up appointment to review your progress and provide continued support.

5. Practical Information

- **Location:** rTMS sessions are conducted at our dedicated suite within the Outpatient Services area of St John of God Hospital.
- **What to Bring:** Please ensure no metallic objects are worn during treatment (e.g., jewellery, hairpins). You'll be provided with comfortable seating and ear protection during the session.
- **Directions and Parking:** Visitor parking is available on-site. Our reception team can assist with directions and any other information you may need.



6. Side Effects

Side effects are generally mild and may include:

- Mild muscle twitching or a tapping sensation on the scalp during treatment.
- Temporary headache, which can often be relieved with simple pain relief medication.
- Fatigue, which tends to improve as treatment progresses.

The risk of seizure is very low (1 in 60,000) and subsides once the treatment coil is turned off. If you have any concerns, please discuss these with our team.

7. Follow-Up and Further Support

We will arrange a follow-up review after the conclusion of your treatment. This ensures ongoing support and collaboration between our rTMS team and your referrer to optimise your recovery journey.





8. Contact Information

8.1 For Patients

If you would like more information or wish to discuss whether rTMS treatment is suitable for you, please contact:

St John of God Hospital,
Stillorgan, Co. Dublin, A94 FH92
Email: tmsreferrals@sjog.ie

8.2 For Referrers

Referrals can be submitted via the following methods:

HealthLink

Email: tmsreferrals@sjog.ie

Post

Download our rTMS referral form from the 'Referrers' section and send it to:

St John of God Hospital Outpatient Services
Stillorgan, Co. Dublin, A94 FH92 For more information,
visit www.stjohnofgodhospital.ie.

We are committed to providing high-quality, compassionate care. Your feedback is important to us. Please speak with your rTMS clinician if you wish to share your experience or raise any concerns.



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