Information on the Vagus Nerve Stimulator (VNS) for Schools

What is the Vagus Nerve Stimulator:

The VNS provides a mild electrical stimulation to the brain from a generator which is usually implanted in the left side of the chest. This stimulation is sent to the brain via a lead that is attached to the vagus nerve. This usually occurs every 5 minutes for 30 seconds.

Why the stimulator is used:

The VNS system is used in patients who have *uncontrolled seizures* which have not responded to anticonvulsant medications, the ketogenic diet and/or epilepsy surgery.

The Magnet:

If the patient or caregiver/teacher knows they are about to have a seizure or if the patient is having a seizure, the magnet can be used to try to abort the seizure or decrease the length and/or intensity of the seizure.

To use the magnet it must be *placed over* the VNS system for a count of 3 (1-1000, 2-1000, 3-1000) then remove. This will deliver an extra stimulation to the patient which is *stronger and lasts longer*. Wait 60-90 seconds before using the magnet a second time. If the seizure does not stop after a second use, call 911.

Magnet safety:

The magnet can damage computer disks, credit cards and other items affected by strong magnetic fields. *Keep the magnet at least 8-10 inches away from these items.*

*The magnet needs to be available at all times.* There are a variety of ways to do this: wrist pouch, waist pouch, bookbag, etc. The school nurse or the teacher can discuss with the family the best option for them to have access to the magnet.

For further information please contact the following websites:

Epilepsy Foundation Association.com---for School Nurses