

Electromyography (EMG) Patient Information Guide

Description of Electromyogram (EMG)

EMG testing is a diagnostic examination of the peripheral nervous system, which includes nerve and muscle functions. The EMG test includes nerve conduction studies and muscle needle examination.

The nerve conduction studies are performed by placing electrodes on the skin, over certain nerves and muscles, and recording the responses when electrical impulses are applied to the nerve. The muscle needle examination involves direct recording of muscle activity at rest and during contraction by inserting a small needle electrode into various muscles.

Preparation

At the time of an EMG appointment, the patient's skin should be dry and clean without lotions, oils or creams. Wear loose and comfortable clothing on the day of the test. The patient can take all medications as prescribed by his or her physician. However, if the patient is on Coumadin, Mestinon or Botox, please notify us at the time the appointment is made. There are no aftereffects of the EMG test and the patient can return to his or her usual activities immediately upon leaving the laboratory.

During the Procedure

During EMG, small pins or needles are inserted into muscles to measure electrical activity. The needles are different than needles used for injection of medications. They are small and solid, not hollow like hypodermic needles. Because no medication is injected, discomfort is much less than with shots.

- You will be asked to contract your muscles by moving a small amount during the testing.
- With nerve conduction studies, small electrodes will be taped to your skin or placed around your fingers. You typically will experience a mild and brief tingling or shock, which may be a bit unpleasant.
- The physician who administers the test will explain the procedure. Often muscle activity is monitored through a speaker during the test, which may make a popping or soft roaring noise.
- Testing may take from 30-60 minutes.

Results

It is our policy to handle all test results in a secure and confidential manner. Our physician will explain and go over the results to patient right after the completion of the test. A copy of the test report will be sent to your referring physician also. If you would like to receive a copy of the report for your record, please inform our staff and we'll be happy to send you one. Most test results are available within one to two days of testing.