

Electromyography (EMG)

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Following your Nerve Conduction Studies (NCS), you might need to have an EMG study performed.

EMG is a diagnostic test which looks at how well your muscles are working. The EMG test can give helpful information about the muscle itself and also about the connection between the muscle and the nerve.

EMG is always performed by a medically qualified Consultant Clinical Neurophysiologist.

How do I prepare for the test?

- Please keep your hands and feet as warm as possible, especially in cold weather.
- Please wear loose clothing that gives easy access to your arms and legs.
- Please avoid using moisturising creams or gels on your skin on the day of the test as they can interfere with the test.
- Please remove any jewellery or watches before the test (a wedding band is fine).
- You can eat, drink and take any medicine as usual.
- Please bring a list of medicines you may be on.

What happens during the test?

If an EMG is required, a fine needle will be inserted into the muscle to view and listen to its activity. You may be asked to move in a certain way so that the doctor can see what happens when you use the muscle. The EMG machine can be quite noisy whilst you do this, as it changes the movements you make into sounds.

Depending on your condition, muscles may need to be examined in the arms, legs, shoulder, face, or around the chest wall.

The needle itself can feel a little uncomfortable but is very thin, even thinner than an acupuncture needle.

If you feel that any part of the test is getting too uncomfortable, please let the doctor know and they will try their best to minimise the discomfort.

EMG takes up to 15-30 minutes.

Side-effects

General EMG

- EMG may cause a little bruising and soreness around the site of the test, but no lasting effect and you can resume normal activity straight away.
- Having this test will not affect your ability to drive home.
- This test carries no risk to pregnancy.

Examining muscles around the chest wall

- The doctor performing the tests will tell you if this type of EMG is required and will ask for your consent.
- EMG of muscles around the chest wall carries an extra, very small risk of producing pneumothorax (air in the chest). This happens where air leaks out of the lung and becomes entrapped within the chest cavity. This is rare, but complication can cause shortness of breath and chest pain. A pneumothorax is diagnosed by taking a chest X-Ray and, if present, will require you to remain in hospital and possibly to have further interventions.

- If you do have this type of EMG, we request that you remain in the Neurophysiology waiting area for at least thirty minutes and to let us know if you do not feel well. We will check on you during this period of time.
- If you develop any chest pain, breathlessness or feel unwell once you have left the Department we would advise that you seek urgent medical advice/attend an Accident & Emergency Department.

When will I get the results?

After completing the examination, the results will be analysed and a report, to be sent to the doctor who referred you. This may take up to 3 weeks.

Pacemakers, Internal Cardiac Defibrillators (ICDs) and Warfarin

If you have a pacemaker or Internal Cardiac Defibrillator (ICD) or you take Warfarin could you please inform the Neurophysiology Department on the number below, before your appointment date.

What are the consequences of not having the EMG?

EMG is a well-established method of helping doctors to diagnose and treat a wide range of medical conditions. Your doctor would not have as complete a picture as required and hence your diagnosis may take longer and/or your treatment may not be the most appropriate.

Contacting Us

Staff in the department will be happy to answer any query you may have and will do their best to ensure your comfort.

Please let us know if you are unable to attend your appointment by ringing the telephone number below.

If you have any questions or concerns about the test please ring the **Neurophysiology Department** on **01392 402654**.

We welcome feedback about our service. Please tell a member of staff if you felt this service is good or otherwise.

The Trust cannot accept any responsibility for the accuracy of the information given if the leaflet is not used by RD&E staff undertaking procedures at the RD&E hospitals.

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