



Electromyography (EMG) and Nerve Conduction Testing



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What is an EMG?

EMG stands for electromyography. It's a test that checks how your nerves and muscles are working. The test has two parts:

- Nerve conduction study
- Needle EMG

Why is an EMG done?

It helps doctors find the cause of symptoms like:

- Numbness
- Tingling
- Pain
- Muscle weakness

An EMG can show if there's a problem with your nerves (neuropathy, radiculopathy) or muscles (myopathy, myositis).

What happens during the test?

Nerve Conduction Study

Small metal discs (electrodes) are placed on your skin. These pick up signals from your nerves when a technician sends a small, safe electrical current to them. Everyone's response is different. You may feel a quick zap or twitch in your arm or leg.

Needle EMG

A thin needle is placed into your muscles to record activity when you are still and when you move. No electricity is used during this part. You'll be asked to move the muscle a little. The needle does not inject any medicine and does not go into your spine.

Doctors may check 6–10 muscles in each of your arms and legs. Sometimes muscles in the neck or back are also tested.



The procedure takes 45-90 minutes, depending on how many muscles are tested. It may be uncomfortable, but most people do well without any medicine or sedation.

What should I expect after the test?

You may have a small bruise or a little bleeding where the needle was placed. This usually goes away quickly. Most people don't need any pain medicine after the test. You can take Tylenol® if needed.

How do I get my results?

Your results will be available in your Ochsner medical record within 48 hours (2 business days). Your doctor will talk with you about what the results mean. If you have questions, ask your doctor or the testing staff about when and how to get your results.



How to Prepare

Let your doctor know if you:

- Take blood thinners like warfarin (Coumadin®)
- Have bleeding problems, hepatitis, HIV, or other blood diseases
- Have a pacemaker or defibrillator
- Have any infections

Do not apply lotion or oil to your hands, arms, feet, or legs on the day of the test. It can keep the electrodes from sticking.