

When your doctor suspects you may have a nerve or muscle problem, he may order a test commonly referred to as an "EMG". Please notify our office at 803-256-4107 at least 24 hours prior to your appointment time if you need to reschedule or cancel to avoid a \$150 no-show charge.

**What is an EMG?**

EMG (electromyography) is a medical test which provides detailed information about nerves and muscles. It is one of several types of electrodiagnostic services available and is directed by a physician. Usually, the test has two parts. First, a small, handheld stimulator gently activates the nerve underneath the skin, and responses are measured on a viewing screen. Secondly, a tiny, thin, disposable sterile probe is inserted through the skin into one or more muscles. The muscle responses are then evaluated on a viewing screen. The test may be simple or complex depending upon the type of problem, and may take from 20 to 45 minutes.

**Does it hurt?**

There may be minor, but brief, discomfort. When the nerve is activated, there is slight tingle or shock. When the muscle is tested, the needle insertion is about as painful as a mosquito bite.

**What should I tell the examiner?**

The person performing the examination needs to know if you are taking any medications to "thin" the blood, such as Coumadin, Aggrenox, or Plavix, or if you have any blood/bleeding problems. There is usually no need to stop any of these medications before the test. If you have an internal device such as a heart pacemaker or automatic defibrillator, this should be mentioned before the test is started so that adequate safety precautions can be taken.

**Are there any significant risks involved?**

No. Minor bruising or mild muscle tenderness may occur, but there are no significant risks associated with the procedure. Sterile, disposable electrodes are used.

**Are there any special preparations?**

Yes. Please follow the following guidelines:

- Avoid using lotions or creams on the skin just before having the test
- During cooler months, it is best to arrive with your hands and feet already warm
- Wear loose-fitting clothes and, whenever possible, do not wear rings, watches, bracelets, or corsets
- You should be able to operate a motor vehicle without difficulty afterwards, but feel free to bring an escort

**When will the test results be ready and who gives them to me?**

After the exam is completed, the physician rendering the service will carefully review and compile his findings. Results are usually discussed with the patient, and often, a report can be given on the same day.

**Who determines treatment?**

Usually, treatment is determined by the referring physician on a follow-up visit. Sometimes, appropriate referral elsewhere can be directed at the time of the study, on a case-by-case basis.

If you have any questions or comments, please call us.

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