EMG and Nerve Conduction Tests

EMG, also called electromyogram, measures how your muscles and nerves work. The nerve conduction test measures how your nerves work in a different way. These tests measure electrical signals and may be done to check a nerve injury or diseases of your muscles or nerves. Most often these tests are done together, starting with the nerve conduction test.

Tell your doctor if you:

• Have bleeding problems
• Take blood thinner medicine
• Have hemophilia
• Have a pacemaker or other heart device

Arrive on time for your test. Plan on this test taking about 1 hour.

Day of your test

• Take your usual medicines.
• Bathe or shower so your skin is clean for the test, but do not apply any lotions, creams or oils to your skin until the test is done.
• Based on the problems you are having, the tests may be done on your arms and neck, or your legs and lower back, or both.
• Wear loose clothing. A tank top and shorts may allow the test to be done without you needing to change into a hospital gown.
• You may be seated in a chair or lie on a bed or table for the tests.

During the Nerve Conduction Test

• Pads are placed on your skin to measure how a nerve responds.
• Other pads will be placed over the nerve to give very small shocks. The shock causes a quick tingle and your muscle may twitch.
• Several nerves may be tested.

During the EMG

• A pin electrode is put through your skin and into your muscle. This is to measure electrical signals from your muscles.
• It may hurt when the pin is placed in your muscle.
• One muscle is tested at a time.
• Signals from your muscles show up on a screen and are heard over a speaker.
• You may be asked to tighten and release the muscle to see if the signals change.
• You may watch, listen, and ask questions during the test.
The doctor will talk to you about your test results.

You can return to your usual activity after the tests.

**Talk to your doctor or nurse if you have any questions or concerns.**