

EMG Laboratory: Have questions or need to change appointment? Please call 434-924-2706

EMG Patient Instructions

What is an EMG?

An EMG, or electromyogram, is an electrical test of peripheral nerves and muscles. Most EMG studies include nerve conduction studies and the EMG test. In many cases, this test looks for evidence of nerve damage, diseases of the nerve and/or muscle, or disorders of the neuromuscular junction (where the nerve and muscle connect).

No special dietary restrictions are necessary for this test. You should take your medications as usual (**except for Mestinon** – you must withhold this medication for 24 hours prior to your appointment date).

The test usually takes at least 90 minutes, unless you are having specialized testing. Other specialized tests are performed in the EMG Lab (single fiber EMG) and are quite different from the procedure described below.

How is this procedure performed?

Procedures may vary but, in general, this is what to expect:

- Please arrive at the Primary Care Center 20 minutes before your appointment and register on the 1st floor.
- After registering, please go to the EMG Lab located on the Ground Floor of the Primary Care Center (one floor below) and check in at the front desk.
- You will be escorted to an EMG exam room and asked to change into a gown to accommodate requested testing. A doctor (neurologist) may speak to you prior to testing and possibly do a quick physical exam.
- In most cases you will be warmed (by placing hands/feet in warm water) or by warm blankets, depending on the circumstances. This makes the test results more accurate.
- An EMG technician and/or the neurologist will perform nerve conduction studies by taping electrodes on the surface of your skin – usually on your hands and/or feet. He/she will then stimulate the nerve with a small electrical impulse (a small “shock” that will often make your muscles twitch).
- The neurologist will then perform the EMG test by examining muscles with a small needle electrode. You will feel the electrode inserted through the skin into the muscle. The needle electrode does not give any shocks; it is used to record the electrical activity within the muscle. It is possible the small needle may cause some localized discomfort/soreness. The number of muscles the doctor will test depends on what he/she sees while examining each muscle, and what questions your referring doctor is asking to be answered. Any soreness should resolve within a several hours to days. If tested muscles continue to be bothersome, you may speak with your referring provider, or call the EMG Lab for further advice.
- The data collected during the study will later be analyzed and interpreted by the neurologist to create a report. Test results will be sent to the referring physician, and also your primary care physician, if he/she is listed in the hospital computer system. If you would like results sent elsewhere, you may contact Medical Records at 434-924-5136 or download the form from this link: <https://hit.healthsystem.virginia.edu/departments/health-information-services/release-of-information/authorization-of-release-of-information/>