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# EMG/NCV Test

## What is this test?

The test is called EMG/NCV. EMG stands for 'Electromyography' and NCV stands for 'Nerve Conduction Velocity' which means electrical testing of muscles and nerves respectively. It is extension of the history and physical examination invaluable in identifying the type, severity and location of nerve and muscle injury.

## What happens during the test?

You would be lying next to an EMG machine which is connected to desktop or laptop computer. The test consists of two parts, though at times one may be done without the other. The first part is called Nerve Conduction Studies. In this part, brief repeated electrical shocks are delivered to the nerves of arm or leg to determine how fast or slowly your nerves are conducting the electrical current. These shocks are tolerable and do not cause any long lasting damage. As there are several nerves in each extremity which need to be tested, the procedure is repeated 3-4 times or more per extremity studied.

The second part of the test is called Electromyography(needle examination). In this part, thin and fine needle is inserted in the muscle so as to record muscle activity. The pain is not severe and is bearable. On average, a muscle can be tested 1-5 minutes though this may vary with the type of problem being investigated. In a given patient 2-5 muscles are tested, but this may vary.

## How long does the test last?

On average, the nerve conduction takes anywhere between 15 to 45 minutes. The needle examination usually takes 5 to 20 minutes. So you need to spare 30-60 minutes for the test.

## What preparations are necessary for the test?

No preparations are needed for the test. You do not need to fast. You can drive yourself to and from the test. You need not bring a friend or a relative with you. You can resume your regular activity immediately after the test is completed. With few exceptions, you may continue taking medication prescribed by your physician. However, if you are taking a blood thinner( warfarin or Acitrom), you should notify it, since in that case the needle part of the test may cause bleeding inside the muscle.

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## **Can I ask for some pain medication after the test?**

Usually the pain is not very severe and any pain medication is not necessary. You may however take pain killer if needed.

## **How soon will I find out the results?**

The doctor has to see and analyse your record. Typically the technician will inform you when you will get the results. It may even take up to 1 day in complicated cases. Be patient for the results.

## **What are indications for EMG-NCV test?**

EMG/NCV is usually ordered when patients are having problems with their muscles or nerves.

Examples Carpal Tunnel Syndrome

- Ulnar Neuropathy
- Wrist drop
- Foot drop
- Peripheral Neuropathy
- GBS/ CIDP
- Motor Neuron Disease
- Brachial Plexopathies
- Lumbar Plexopathies
- Myasthenia Gravis
- Muscular Dystrophy

## **How much will the test cost?**

The cost may vary as per center and as per time for which test is done.

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