



EMG/Electrodiagnostic Studies

What is an EMG?

An EMG (electromyography) is a diagnostic test of the peripheral nervous system.

Who can benefit from EMG studies?

Patients with back pain, neck pain, arm or leg pains may benefit from EMGs. A few common examples of problems which can be detected are:

- Carpal Tunnel syndrome
- Arm pain/numbness
- Sciatica
- Peripheral neuropathy

How do EMGs help?

Often times an MRI or CT scan is limited as it only gives information about anatomy of the bone or disc for example. However, with an EMG, it is possible to evaluate the actual function of the nerves. It is also often useful in following progress or assessing prognosis for nerve related injuries.

How is the study performed?

The study is comprised of two parts. The first part is called a Nerve Conduction Study. This involves sticker electrodes applied to the skin, and an electrical stimulation applied to the skin. This tests the health

of the nerves. Next, the EMG portion is performed which utilizes a small pin to sample different muscles, detecting electrical signals that give information about the health of the muscles and nerves.

What if I am taking blood thinning medications? (Eg., Coumadin, Plavix, Ticlid, Aggrenox):

There is no need to discontinue blood thinning medications for an EMG.

Does the EMG hurt?

Most patients describe the electrical stimulation as a “strange” sensation, as if “hitting their funny bone.” Most patients find the pin portion of the exam only mildly uncomfortable.

How long does the EMG take to complete?

Usually between 30 minutes and 1 hour is required to complete an EMG study, depending on the number of limbs involved. Prior to the EMG study, a brief history and physical examination is performed to improve the focus of the study.

Will I know the results right away?

Yes, the doctor will discuss the results with you after the test. However, it may take a few days for the final report to be generated and received by your referring physician.

May I drive after the EMG Test?

Yes, you may drive. You do not need to bring a driver.