

Electromyogram (EMG)

QEII

What is an electromyogram (EMG)?

An EMG is a test that uses electricity to check how your nerves and muscles are working.

How do I get ready for an EMG?

- Your hands and/or feet must be warm for this test. If they are not warm, we will ask you to put your hands and/or feet in a warm water bath before the test.
- Tell the receptionist and the technologist if you have a pacemaker or stimulator. You can still have an EMG.
- **If you are taking blood thinners**, you may not be able to have part of the test. Tell the doctor or nurse practitioner if you are taking warfarin (Coumadin®) or another blood thinner.



How is an EMG done?

A technologist and/or a doctor will do the test. It is usually done in 2 parts:

Nerve conduction studies

- › Nerve conduction studies use small, electrical shocks to stimulate specific nerves. This test can be done on nerves in the arms, legs, or face. It will make your arm, leg, or face twitch briefly. You may feel slightly uncomfortable, but most people do not mind it. As each nerve is stimulated, we will measure how fast and how well it transmits messages.

Muscle electrical activity testing

- › The electrical activity in your muscle is measured with an electrode (a thin, disposable needle placed into your muscle). **You will not be given a shock.** The electrode picks up the electricity in the muscle. The doctor can see the electrical activity on a screen and hear it on a loudspeaker. Most people find this a little uncomfortable.

How long will the EMG take?

This will depend on why you were referred for the test. It may take from 15 to 90 minutes (1 ½ hours).

When will I get the results?

- The EMG doctor will interpret the test results. A report will be sent to the health care provider who referred you for the test. This report will help your health care provider figure out what type of disorder you have.
- The health care provider who referred you for the test will talk with you about the EMG results.

**What are your questions? Please ask.
We are here to help you.**

**In Nova Scotia you can call 811 to talk with
a registered nurse about your health care
questions 24/7.**

Looking for more health information?

Find this pamphlet and all our patient resources here: <https://library.nshealth.ca/PatientEducation>

Contact your local public library for books, videos, magazines, and other resources.

For more information, go to <http://library.novascotia.ca>

Connect with a registered nurse in Nova Scotia any time: call 811 or visit <https://811.novascotia.ca>

Learn about other programs and services in your community: call 211 or visit <http://ns.211.ca>

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The information is not intended to be and does not constitute health care or medical advice.
If you have any questions, please ask your health care provider.