

Understanding Your Electromyogram (EMG)

Key Points

- Before sedation you must follow the eating and drinking guidelines.
- Your doctor will contact you to talk about the test results.

What is an EMG?

An EMG is an electrical test of nerves and muscles. A doctor does the test, often with the help of a technologist.

The test is often done in two parts:

1. Electrical stimulation of nerves
2. Measurement of muscle electrical activity

What should I do before the test?

You don't need to do anything to get ready for the test. It is done at Gillette Children's Specialty Healthcare, on the third floor. Please tell the EMG personnel if you are taking Coumadin, have a pacemaker or a chronic infection such as, hepatitis B or HIV.

What will happen during the test?

3. To test your nerves, the doctor or technologist will place electrodes on your skin. These electrodes will give small electrical shocks or stimulations to the nerve. The stimulation causes a brief tingling sensation. The doctor will measure the speed and size of your nerve or muscle responses.
4. To test the response of the muscles, your doctor will put a fine needle electrode in your muscles. No shocks are given, since the needle picks up the electricity normally present in the muscle. This electrical activity is shown on a screen and broadcast on a speaker so your doctor can see and hear it.

The test will take 15 to 60 minutes.

The doctor might order a numbing medicine (LMX) for your skin. Sedation (calming) medicine might be used, such as:

Versed (Midazolam): Versed helps patients remain calm during a test or procedure. It also can decrease a person's memory of an unpleasant experience. Versed is given by mouth or rectum. The side effects are drowsiness, poor recall and general muscle relaxation. Eating and drinking guidelines (NPO protocol) must be followed before sedation.

Nitrous oxide (laughing gas): Nitrous oxide helps patients relax and lessens the discomfort they experience. The

medicine is inhaled through a mask before and during the procedure. Nausea and vomiting might occur. Eating and drinking guidelines (NPO protocol) must be followed before sedation.

What happens after the test?

A specially trained primary-care provider will interpret your EMG test results. A report is then sent to your referring or primary doctor. Your doctor will talk to you about the results of the test. Information in the report will be used to help your doctor coordinate your care.

Make An Appointment

[651-290-8707](tel:651-290-8707)

Refer a Patient

[651-325-2200](tel:651-325-2200)

This information is for educational purposes only. It is not intended to replace the advice of your health care providers. If you have any questions, talk with your doctor or others on your health care team.

If you are a Gillette patient with urgent questions or concerns, please contact Telehealth Nursing at [651-229-3890](tel:651-229-3890).