

# ELECTROMYOGRAM AND NERVE CONDUCTION STUDIES (EMG/NCS) INSTRUCTIONS

## How to Prepare

The neurologist conducting the EMG will need to know if you have certain medical conditions. Tell the neurologist and other EMG lab personnel if you:

- Have a pacemaker or any other electrical medical device
- Take blood-thinning medications
- Have hemophilia, a blood-clotting disorder that causes prolonged bleeding

## Questions to ask

When you schedule your EMG, you may want to ask the following questions:

- What time do I need to arrive?
- Where is the EMG lab, and what's the best way to find it in the hospital or clinic?
- Do I need to stop taking any prescription or over-the-counter medications before the exam?
- Can a friend or relative be with me during the exam?

## Bathing

Take a shower or bath shortly before your exam in order to remove oils from your skin. Don't apply lotions or creams before the exam.

## What to Expect

You'll likely be asked to change into a hospital gown for the procedure and lie down on an examination table. The following explanations can help you understand what will happen during the exam.

- **Electrodes.** The neurologist or a technician places surface electrodes at various locations on your skin depending on where you're experiencing symptoms. Or the neurologist may insert needle electrodes at different sites depending on your symptoms.
- **Sensations.** The electrodes will at times transmit a tiny electrical current that you may feel as a twinge or spasm. The needle electrode may cause discomfort or pain that usually ends shortly after the needle is removed.

If you're concerned about discomfort or pain, you may want to talk to the neurologist about taking a short break during the exam.

- **Instructions.** During the needle EMG, the neurologist will assess whether there is any spontaneous electrical activity when the muscle is at rest — activity that isn't present in healthy muscle tissue — and the degree of activity when you slightly contract the muscle.

He or she will give you instructions on resting and contracting a muscle at appropriate times. Depending on what muscles and nerves the neurologist is examining, he or she may ask you to change positions during the exam.

### **After your EMG**

You may experience some temporary, minor bruising where the needle electrode was inserted into your muscle. This bruising should fade within several days. If it persists, contact your primary care doctor.