

# Electromyography



Barnes Building  
Neurophysiology  
**0161 206 2068**



Health & care  
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The Information Standard



## Introduction

Electromyography (EMG) is a procedure used to check how well the muscles are working in your arms and legs.

## Why do EMG?

EMG when combined with a history, examination and scan results may help to diagnose a wide range of muscle conditions.

Your doctor will be able to explain why it is important for you to have this test.

## How is EMG performed?

A fine needle is inserted into a muscle in your arm and/or leg. You will be asked to first relax the limb and then to move it. The doctor may need to test several different muscles.

You will feel a sharp scratch when the needle is inserted and discomfort when you exercise the muscle.

## What are the side effects and risks?

Afterwards the muscle may bruise and it may feel sore. Most people tolerate the procedure without any problem.

In rare cases the limb may bruise badly and the limb may swell (this is almost only seen in people who have a low platelet count, who suffer from bleeding disorders such as haemophilia or who are on blood thinning medications such as heparin, warfarin or synthrone). If this happens you should go straight to the Accident and Emergency department.

**If you are taking blood thinning medications such as warfarin or synthrone**, you must bring your blood test card (INR card) with you. In order to proceed with the test you will need to have had a recent blood test (within a day or two of your appointment with us).

If this information is not available this test will not be performed.

If your INR reading is considered too high by the doctor performing the test, this test will not be performed. This is for your safety.

If the test can't be performed on the day, the doctor will answer your questions and discuss the options with you.

## What happens if I decide to have an EMG?

You will have the opportunity to ask the doctor questions about the information in this leaflet before you decide whether or not to have an EMG.

There will be no need to sign a formal consent form. As soon as you agree to the test we can begin. The entire procedure usually takes 20-60mins.

On the day of the test please avoid using a sun barrier and other types of skin cream. Please have a bath or shower the night before your test. Wear short sleeves and loose fitting clothes. You may need to undress down to your underwear. Blankets and gowns are provided but if you wish you may bring your own shorts and/or t-shirt to wear.

Please remove any rings, watches or bracelets prior to attending the department. If removing a ring is difficult then don't worry, just remove as many as possible.

## What happens if I decide not to have EMG?

Your doctor will need to discuss the likely consequences of this decision. For example, your doctor may find it more difficult to diagnose and/or treat your condition.

## Is there anything else I should know?

- Please arrive in good time for your appointment. If you think you will be late, please telephone us as soon as possible. It may be necessary to re-book another appointment for you. Parking can be difficult - please allow for this. There is a charge for parking
- This test is safe in pregnancy
- You may eat and drink normally before your test
- Please note there are no facilities for childcare while you are having your test. For safety reasons, children of any age are not allowed in the test rooms

- If you are currently taking any medication you should continue to do so, unless otherwise advised by your own GP or consultant
- If you require an ambulance you should contact your own GP to make the arrangements. Please let us know if you will be coming by ambulance
- You may be invited back to have further tests if the consultant in our department or your referring doctor/consultant thinks that a repeat test or a different test may be helpful
- In this case you may receive an appointment for another test before seeing your referring doctor/consultant for the results of your first test
- The main reason for this is to save time and inconvenience for you

## Contact details

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For further information on this leaflet, it's references and sources used, please contact **0161 206 2068**.

Copies of this information are available in other languages and formats upon request.

In accordance with the Equality Act we will make 'reasonable adjustments' to enable individuals with disabilities, to access this treatment / service.

**If you need this interpreting please telephone**

Polish

Jeżeli potrzebne jest Państwu tłumaczenie, proszę zadzwonić pod numer.

Urdu

اگر آپ کو اس ترجمانی کی ضرورت ہے تو مہربانی کر کے فون کریں۔

Arabic

إذا كنتم بحاجة الى تفسير او ترجمة هذا الرجاء الاتصال

Chinese

如果需要翻译，请拨打电话

Farsi

اگر به ترجمه این نیاز دارید ، لطفاً تلفن کنید

**0161 206 0224**

Email: [InterpretationandTrans@srft.nhs.uk](mailto:InterpretationandTrans@srft.nhs.uk)

Under the Human Tissue Act 2004, consent will not be required from living patients from whom tissue has been taken for diagnosis or testing to use any left over tissue for the following purposes: clinical audit, education or training relating to human health, performance assessment, public health monitoring and quality assurance.

If you object to your tissue being used for any of the above purposes, please inform a member of staff immediately.

**Salford Royal operates a smoke-free policy.**

For advice on stopping smoking contact the Hospital Specialist Stop Smoking Service on 0161 206 1779

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