

EMG (Electromyogram) and NCS (Nerve Conduction Study)

Your doctor has ordered an electromyogram (EMG) and an nerve conduction study (NCS) for you. An EMG/NCS is the electrical study of your nerves and muscles. An NCS checks your nerves and an EMG checks your muscles. The test helps your doctor find the cause of your symptoms and choose the best treatment. It takes about 1 to 1½ hours. You do not need to do anything to prepare.

What to Expect During the NCS

During the NCS, we place small metal discs on your skin over the nerves. We send a small electrical current to each nerve. We test several nerves and may test more than one spot on the same nerve. You may feel tingling or brief discomfort. We may dim the lights to see the screen better.

What to Expect During the ENG

During the EMG, the doctor puts a small needle into one muscle at a time. You may feel mild pain when the needle goes in. The test records muscle activity. You do not receive any electrical current during the EMG. You will hear crackling sounds from a speaker, but these sounds come from your muscles.

What to Expect After the Test

The testing area may feel sore, and you may have a small bruise for a day or two.

Test Locations

If you are inpatient, we will perform the test in your room. If you are not inpatient, you will go to one of the clinics below. If you're not sure where to go, contact your doctor.

University Hospital

Stop at registration in the clinic lobby on the 2nd floor to check in. Follow Main Street through the H elevator lobby to the J module. Check in at the Neurodiagnostics desk.

20 South Park Neurology Clinic

Check in on the 1st floor then head to the second floor to suite 202 Neurology.

Results

We will send the results after the test.

When to Call

If you have more questions about the test, please call the location of your test.

Who to Call

If you have questions, please contact your provider through MyChart or call your provider listed in your After Visit Summary or After Hospital Care Plan. For a list of UW Health Clinics, please visit www.uwhealth.org/.

Your health care team may have given you this information as part of your care. If so, please use it and call if you have any questions. If this information was not given to you as part of your care, please check with your doctor. This is not medical advice. This is not to be used for diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. Because each person's health needs are different, you should talk with your doctor or others on your health care team when using this information. If you have an emergency, please call 911. Copyright © 3/2026 University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing. HF#4303.