

# Electromyogram/Nerve Conduction Test

**What is a Nerve Conduction Study (NCS)?** It is a test to measure how quickly nerve impulses travel, using small electrical pulses on the surface of the skin. It can help to find out if a nerve is trapped or damaged.

**What is an Electromyogram (EMG)?** It is an assessment of muscle function carried out by listening to and recording the natural electrical activity within muscles.

**How long does it take?** The test usually takes between 45 and 60 minutes in total but it is difficult to predict exactly how long it will be for everyone. We decide exactly which nerves and muscles to test when you come. On average about a quarter of patients require EMG.

**Pacemakers and Defibrillators:** The test may affect cardiac pacemakers or defibrillators and therefore we need to make additional arrangements for your test to be carried out.

**Warfarin Medication:** It may not be possible to use a needle during the test if you take Warfarin to thin your blood. We may need to liaise with the doctor who referred you, before any appointment can be confirmed. We usually like to know your latest INR reading too.

**It is very important to inform us if you have a cardiac pacemaker or if you take Warfarin to thin your blood. If you do not let us know your test may be cancelled when you arrive.**

**Please telephone immediately:**

**01305 255255**

**What should I do before I come?**

- Please ensure your skin is clean and dry. Do not use any kind of hand cream, lotion or moisturiser for at least 48 hours beforehand.
- Keep as warm as you can, using gloves and warm clothes as necessary
- Wear something loose and comfortable; sleeves should not be tight
- Do not stop taking any medication prescribed by your doctor unless you have specifically been told to do so

**Do I need to undress?** You may be asked to remove items of clothing, especially if your sleeves are tight. You may be asked to remove wrist watches, bracelets and rings

**Why do I need to be warm?** NCS tests are only accurate if you are warm enough. We will check, and may warm your hands and/or feet a little more when you arrive.

**What happens at the appointment?** A Consultant Neurophysiologist and/or a Clinical Physiologist will perform the test. You are asked sit or lie on a couch while several small electrodes are placed on your skin. Then small electrical pulses are used to test different nerves. It feels like a sharp tingling or tapping sensation and may make your muscles twitch. If you have EMG testing a fine needle is gently inserted in a muscle to listen to the natural electrical activity which occurs when you move the muscle. Then you are asked to move in a certain way to contract that particular muscle, but there are no electrical pulses.

**Will it hurt?** Most people find NCS acceptable although some may find it a little uncomfortable. For EMG, the small size of the needle means it should not be too uncomfortable. As with all needles, you may have a little bruising afterwards and it may feel sore for a short time.

**Can I drive?** The test will not affect your ability to drive.

**When will I get my results?** Results are sent to the doctor who referred you for the test. This usually takes 1 to 3 weeks.

**Please phone if you have any further questions: 01305 255255**