What is a single fiber electromyogram?

This test uses a special needle to measure the electrical signals of your muscles. The test is given to patients with weakness of the eyes, face or limbs. It helps diagnose a muscle disease called myasthenia gravis.

Before the test, the doctor will review your history, do a short physical exam and explain the test.

How is the test done?

- The doctor inserts a fine needle into a muscle, usually in the face or forearm.
- The needle is attached to monitors that allow us to see and hear the electrical activity in the muscle.
- Usually we test one or two muscles. This takes about 60 minutes.
- After the test, you may return to your normal routine.

Sometimes we stimulate the nerves in the hands and face with electric charges. You will feel little shocks and twitching in the muscle.

How do I prepare?

- Eat a light breakfast. Wear comfortable clothing.
- Do NOT take pyridostigmine (Mestinon) within 12 hours of the test, or we may need to reschedule. If you are not able to stop this medicine, please tell the scheduler.
- You may take all other medicines prescribed by your doctor.

Does the test cause any side effects?

The needle may cause mild soreness that could last up to a day. You may have a small bruise.

What if I’m feeling nervous?

Most people handle the test without a problem. We do not prescribe medicines for this test. If you feel very anxious, talk to your regular doctor about options to help you relax.

How do I get the results?

In about 24 hours, the doctor who ordered the test will receive a report. You will need to call your doctor.