

Ambulatory EKG Monitoring (Holter Monitor)



IH-III-32
R. D. 11/03
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Cardiovascular Services

What is an ambulatory monitor?

An EKG ambulatory monitor, sometimes called a Holter monitor, is a painless way of checking your heart beat, usually over 24 hours.

You will be asked to wear a small recording machine called a Holter monitor. Your monitor weighs only four pounds. The monitor will record every beat of your heart for as long as you wear it.

How is the test done?

A specially trained technician will put the monitor on you. You should go about your daily routine (unless your doctor tells you to do otherwise). Your Holter monitor will work quietly in the background keeping track of how your heart is beating.

What will happen during the test?

- You will have several small electrodes (they look like round stickers) put on your chest. Wires from your monitor will be attached to the electrodes. Your technician will put on the electrodes and wires for you. Your technician will put your recorder in its carrying case.



- You will be given a piece of paper called a **Patient Diary**. You will need to write down your daily activities on this diary. If you have any symptoms such as:
 - dizziness
 - feeling faint
 - chest painyou should write down how you feel, as well as the time you feel it.
- On the first line at the top of the page you'll see an example of a diary entry. Keep your diary with you all the time and carefully write down your symptoms, the times they happen and your activities. Your recorder doesn't record your voice or any other sounds, only your heart beats. So, to let your doctor know how you feel during the day, it is important that you write in your diary.

(over)

- Your monitor has a "patient event" button for you to use. If you feel a symptom (such as dizziness, feeling faint, or chest pain), push the event button on your recorder. When you push the event button, it puts an electronic mark on the recording tape. Your technician can check for this mark when looking at your recording. When you push the event button, be sure to write down your symptoms in your diary as soon as you can.



Caring for your monitor

- You should treat your monitor like a portable radio.
 - **Do not** drop it.
 - **Do not** take a bath or shower with it on.
- You will also sleep with your monitor. You can put the recorder under a pillow next to you. Please **do not** use an electric blanket, when you sleep with your monitor. An electric blanket that is turned on will interfere with the recording of your heart beats.
- If an electrode or lead wire comes off, use tape to put it back on.

When do I return the monitor?

- If you are an outpatient, you must return the monitor by 12 noon the next working day.
- If you are a patient in the hospital, your technician or nurse will remove the monitor. You may continue the activities that your doctor has said are OK.

Where do I get the results?

- A Cardiologist (heart doctor) will check your test and send the results to your doctor.
- If you are a clinic patient, your doctor will tell you the results at your next visit.