

Holter Monitor

Education for the Patient

What is a Holter monitor?

A Holter Monitor is a small portable device (about the size of a pager) that is capable of continuously recording the heart's electrical activity called electrocardiogram (ECG) from 24-72 hours. Some of the more recent models have the ability to record up to 7 days. The Holter monitor was named after Dr. Norman J. Holter, who invented telemetric cardiac monitoring in 1949.

What is the purpose of a Holter monitor?

Unlike a normal ECG, which can be recorded at your doctor's office, a Holter monitor records your ECG while you perform the activities of everyday life. The importance of this type of ECG monitoring is to see which activities bring on your symptoms. For instance, if a certain activity makes you feel really dizzy, your doctor will be able to see, from the ECG recording, if it is your heart that's causing the dizziness. A Patient Diary will be given to you when the monitor is placed. You will be instructed to record your symptoms, what you were doing when the symptoms came on and the time it occurred. The time to use when recording a diary entry is the time displayed on the Holter monitor itself as it is the time that directly correlates with your symptoms.

How do I get ready for a Holter monitor?

Wear loose clothes on the day when you are scheduled to have a Holter monitor placed. A nurse or an ECG technician will place the monitor on you. It is very important that your skin is clean and dry in order for the electrodes (sticky pads) to stick properly. The nurse/technician will select the appropriate sites where the electrodes are to be placed on the chest area. Excess hair will be shaved and the sites will be wiped with an alcohol prep pad. After the electrodes are in place, the lead wires will be connected.

The monitor can then either be placed in a pouch that can be worn around the neck on a lanyard or in a belt clip that allows you to wear it like a pager.

Important points to remember while wearing a Holter monitor!

1. Do not tamper with the recorder.
2. Do not pull on the electrodes.
3. Do not submerge the recorder in water such as bathing or swimming
4. Record in your diary the time as displayed on the monitor and not from a watch or clock.
5. Return the recorder to the doctor's office at the end of the recording session.