

About Holter Monitoring

A holter monitor is a small portable battery operated device used to record the heart's electrical activity as an [electrocardiogram \(ECG\)](#) over a 24-hour period.

Why have a Holter Monitor?

Some heart rhythm irregularities (palpitations) occur intermittently or when doing certain activities. A continuous 24-hour recording is more likely to detect these abnormalities than a resting ECG.

The electrical problems encountered usually involve irregular heartbeats or abnormal heart rhythms. Their importance can depend on when they occur, how often they occur, how long they last and if they coincide with your symptoms. The holter monitor enables the recording and diagnosis of these events.

Symptoms such as palpitations, dizziness (pre-syncope), and fainting (syncope) and chest pain may be associated with electrical abnormalities.

The efficacy of current medical treatments on electrical abnormalities can also be assessed by wearing a holter.

Preparation

Take your medication as usual unless you are told otherwise by your Doctor. As medications can affect the heart rhythm, please bring along a list of all your current medications. A loose blouse or shirt will allow the holter to be worn more comfortably, ideally a front buttoning shirt is best. You will be unable to shower while the holter monitor is attached, so have a shower or bath prior to your appointment.

How is a monitor put on?

A Cardiac Scientist will be responsible for your holter monitor. Initially, a resting 12 Lead ECG will be performed to determine your baseline heart rate and rhythm.

Several areas on your chest may be shaved and cleaned to ensure good contact with the electrode skin stickers. The holter monitor will then be connected to the electrodes via monitoring leads. The monitor can be clipped to your pants / skirt or can often be placed in your pocket. The device is lightweight and easy to carry with you.

The holter monitor will need to be returned the following day. You may have someone drop the holter monitor back on your behalf should you wish. Your Cardiac Scientist will advise you what time is suitable. You will also be shown how to remove the monitor if necessary.

What happens once the monitor is on?

While wearing the holter monitor you should continue with all your normal daily activities. You will be asked to keep a diary of any symptoms you may get over the recording period. This will require you to make note of the time, the actual symptom you experienced, and what activity you were doing at the time. Mild to moderate exercise is encouraged, however excessive perspiration may cause the electrodes to fall off. When you sleep, it is best to find a position where there is no pressure on the chest electrodes or the attached wires. If any of these wires come loose or detach, please reattach the wire and/or press the electrode firmly back on the skin. Often, the use of medical tape such as a Band-Aid can help in this situation.

Results

After the holter monitor and symptom diary is returned at the arranged time and location the following day, it will be analysed and a full report will then be sent to your doctor within 24hours. You will need to contact the referring doctor who requested the holter monitor to get the results and find out if you require any further testing or treatment.

Risks

There are no risks from holter monitoring. The electrodes on your skin detect the electrical signals from your heart while the device records these signals. Mild skin irritation may occur where the electrodes have made contact with your skin.