

Ambulatory Electrocardiogram – Holter Monitor

Cardiology

What is a Holter Monitor?

It is a non-invasive portable system that is battery-operated. This ambulatory electrocardiogram measures and records your heart's electrical activity (ECG) continuously for 72 hours or 7 days. The Holter Monitor is lightweight and has wires with electrodes (stickers) that attach to your skin. You may continue to do normal daily activities while wearing the Holter monitor. However, you will not be able to take a bath or shower during the test.

What Happens BEFORE the Test?

The technologist will provide you with a complete explanation of the test, instructions on what to do during the test, a journal and will take the time to answer all the questions you may have. The technologist will need to clean your skin with alcohol. It is necessary to shave off any hair and rub the skin with abrasive paper to ensure better adhesion between the electrodes and your skin. The test involves placing self-adhesive electrodes on your chest and connecting them to a box that records heart activity for 72hrs or 7 days. For the 7-day monitor, you'll need to replace the electrodes yourself, following the steps the technologist will explain (see below).

What Happens DURING the Test?

- **SAFETY PRECAUTIONS:** The recorder is **not waterproof**. Do not expose the recorder to water, including adverse weather conditions or taking a bath. The electrodes can irritate the underlying skin and if left in place can cause skin ulceration. If you experience severe irritation, please remove the electrodes.
- It is important that you press and release the event button to mark an event. Note the date and time of the relevant events in the journal that has been provided:
 - **Strenuous or unusual physical or emotional activities or experiences.**
 - **Symptoms such as: chest pain, chest tightness, arm pain, jaw pain, shortness of breath, dizziness, lightheadedness, palpitations (rapid or forceful heart beats), and any other symptoms you may be having.**
- For the **72 hour monitor**, you are not permitted to take a bath or shower while wearing the monitor. Washing by hand is permitted.
- For the **7 day monitor**, you will need to change the electrodes every 3 days. When replacing electrodes during a recording, please proceed as follows:
 - Do not attempt to turn off the recorder when replacing electrodes.
 - Disconnect the ends of the cables from the electrodes.
 - Gently peel off the old electrodes.
 - Wait until your skin has dried completely before attaching new electrodes after bathing. Do not put cream on your skin.
 - Place the new electrodes on your skin as shown on the diagram. (Adjust the electrode placement slightly to the right/left of the previous placement)
 - Reconnect the ends of the cables to the electrodes according to the colour placement on the diagram (on following page).
- Take your medication as usual. Continue with your normal routine.
- Periodically verify that all Holter monitor wires are still firmly attached to your skin. If an electrode detaches, reapply with a new electrode, as indicated on diagram. Occasionally, a light may flicker.
- The technologist will advise you when to remove the monitor. When doing so, remove the adhesive, electrodes and detach wires carefully (**no scissors**). Remove the disposable belt and discard it along with the adhesives.
- You will need to return the monitor, pouch, wires and journal to the Hospital at a predetermined date and

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time.

- When you return to the Hospital as scheduled, please return the monitor to the main entrance of the hospital. At the main information desk, there's a white box for dropping off equipment.
- A cardiologist will analyze all the data obtained after the test is completed. A report will be sent to your doctor within 7 to 10 days. Results will also be available in My Chart. The technologist is not able to provide you with test results.

7 Leadwires

RIGHT

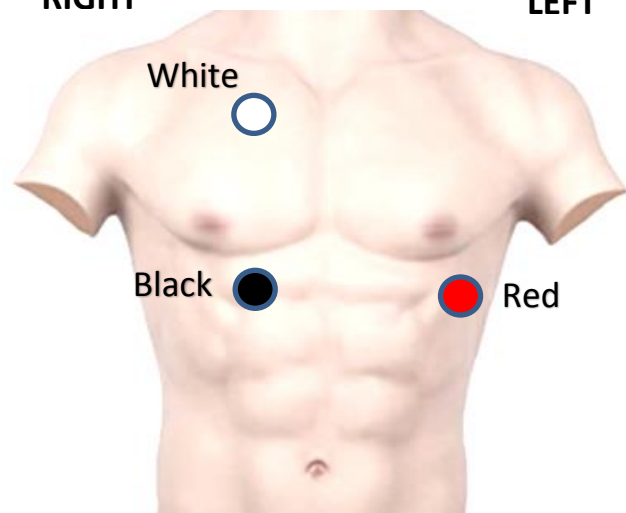
LEFT



3 Leadwires

RIGHT

LEFT



WHAT TO EXPECT DURING THE TEST

You may experience skin irritation, burning, and rash-like symptoms at the electrode sites; on installation, during test, and/or after removal of the holter monitor. Skin irritation may be mild or in very rare cases cause scarring. Mild irritation is a typical reaction from the abrasive paper used during installation and long exposure to the sticky adhesive on the electrodes. The adhesive from electrodes can cause irritant contact dermatitis, which is when your skin becomes irritated from contact chemicals in the adhesive. Common symptoms can include;

- redness; itchy skin; swelling or raised skin; dry, scaly or cracked skin; blisters

For good aftercare and a smooth recovery of your skin, the following advice is extremely important.

AFTERCARE

What NOT to do:

- Rip off bandages and electrodes. Remove them from your skin carefully. First remove wire from the electrode. Use a damp cloth or oil-based product such as olive oil to remove from skin.
- Avoid creams with alcohol and everything that could irritate the skin for the next 48h.
- Do not scratch the affected areas. Moisturize daily and a cold compress can help relieve itching. Do not remove scabs- it may result in scarring. Allow them to heal naturally.

What to do:

- Gently clean away any remaining adhesive
- Apply an eczema-friendly bland and non-scented moisturizer over effect area. Examples: Eucerin, Aveeno, Cetaphil etc. Polysporin may be used on extreme cases of ulcerated/ broken skin.
- A daily application of moisturizing cream is recommended.