

Alfi Moris Beshay, MD, MSc, FRCP(C)
Internal Medicine & Cardiovascular Disease

Cardiac Event Monitoring – Patient Information Sheet

Definition

- This test provides monitoring of the electrical activity of your heart and recording of your heart rhythm during usual daily activities. The term "Event Monitoring" is used because traditionally the test relied on the occurrence of symptoms, or "events"; as the patient activated the Event Monitor to record his/her ECG when symptoms occur. Newer monitors also have the ability to auto capture ECG events even if the patient does not feel the symptom to initiate the recording. The testing period can last up to 30 days.

Why is the test performed ?

- This test is used to evaluate transient, infrequent symptoms – that usually happens three times or less in one week- such as shortness of breath, dizziness, skipped beats, fainting and palpitations and it is difficult to catch on a Holter monitor because they are infrequent.
- Other times Cardiac Event Monitoring is used to evaluate the effects of changes in doses or types of cardiac medication, or to evaluate the function of your pacemaker or ICD during normal day to day activity.

How is the test performed ?

- Electrodes (small sticky conducting patches) are placed on your chest and attached with wires to a small digital recording monitor about the size of a pager. The monitor is battery operated. Electrodes and wires will be secured with tape to your chest. You will learn how to take the device off during showers and baths.
- The monitor will constantly record your heart beats, when symptoms occur you press a button on the monitor to permanently record your heart rhythm at that event. The monitor records the event for the 60 seconds prior to your pushing the button and up to 40 seconds after the arrhythmia is over After the recording is complete you transmit the ECG electronically via phone to a monitor center. The monitoring staff reviews the tracings & forwards a copy to our office for analysis. A report is generated & forwarded to your physician.
- A diary will be given to you when you are connected to the Cardiac Event Monitor. You will need to carry the diary with you while you are wearing the monitor. **IT IS VERY IMPORTANT** that you accurately record your symptoms and activities with the times when they occurred so that the doctor can correlate them with your Cardiac Event Monitor findings.

How to prepare for the test ?

- There is no special preparation for the test. The recording monitor will be started by technician, and you will be given instructions on how to replace electrodes should they become loosened. Tell the technician if you are allergic to any tape or other adhesives.
- You may wear a loose-fitting blouse or shirt. Avoid wearing jewelry or clothes with metal buttons or buckles, because these can interfere with the recording. Women should not wear an underwear bra for the same reason.

How will the test feel ?

- There is no discomfort associated with the test. Hair may need to be shaved from the chest for electrode placement. The electrode sites may itch slightly during the monitoring, and the skin on your chest may be slightly irritated when the electrodes are removed. The recording unit is very lightweight, so carrying it usually is not uncomfortable. You must keep the monitor close to the body, either in a pocket or Clipped in your belt.
- Continue normal activities while wearing the monitor. Don't avoid stress, work, or exercise.
- When sleeping, try to stay on your back with the recorder carefully positioned at your side so that the electrodes are not pulled off.

What the risks are ?

- There are no risks associated with the test. The electrodes placed on your skin detect only the electrical signals from your heart. No electricity is sent through your body, and there is no possibility of receiving an electric shock. However, you should be sure not to let the monitor get wet.

Special considerations

- Electrodes must be firmly attached to the chest to permit accurate recording of the heart's activity.
- While you are wearing a monitor, try to stay away from magnets, metal detectors, high-voltage areas, garage door openers, microwave ovens, and electric blankets. Do not use an electric toothbrush or shaver. Signals from these types of electronic equipment can sometimes interfere with the recording.
- Finally, The Cardiac Event Monitor will give accurate results only if you **REMEMBER** to start the recorder when symptoms of possible heart problems occur.