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Holter Monitor – Patient Information Sheet

Definition

- Holter monitoring provides a continuous recording of heart rhythm (as in ECG) during normal activity. The monitor is usually worn for extended period of time (24 to 60 hours) to allow the physicians to look at each individual heart beat.

Why the test is performed ?

- Your physician may recommend this type of testing whenever you experience symptoms like dizziness, palpitations, skipped beats, fainting, chest pains or other sensations which may occur during normal day to day activities and it is also used to determine how the heart responds to regular activity.
- Other times Holter monitoring is used include the following: to evaluate the effects of changes in doses or types of cardiac medication; after a heart attack to diagnose an abnormal or dangerous heart rhythm. To evaluate the function of your pacemaker during normal day to day activity.

How the test is performed ?

- Electrodes (small sticky conducting patches) are placed on your chest and attached with wires to a small digital recording monitor that you can clip it over your belt like a cell phone. The monitor is battery operated. Several areas on your chest may be shaved and cleaned. Electrodes and wires will be applied to your chest, and secured with tape by the technician in our office.
- Your heart electrical activity is recorded (much like the recording of an ECG) into a flash card inside the monitor during the entire test period, while you keep a diary of your activities. The recording is then analyzed using computer software, from this recording a wide variety of information can be obtained including heart rates during day and night, abnormal heart beats, and recording of rhythm during any symptoms throughout the test.
- A diary will be given to you when you are connected to the Holter 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 Holter 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.
- You may shower or bathe before you start the test; you will not be able to do so while you are wearing a Holter monitor.

How the test will feel ?

- There is no discomfort associated with the test. Hair may need to be shaved from the chest for electrode placement. 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. Don't take a shower. A sponge bath is OK, be careful so the electrodes don't pull off.
- If an electrode falls off or the unit makes noise, call to see what you should do.

What the risks are ?

- There are no risks associated with the test. 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.