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Ambulatory Electrocardiographic Monitoring (HOLTER MONITOR)

What is ambulatory electrocardiographic monitoring?

Ambulatory electrocardiographic monitoring, or a Holter monitor, refers to a portable device that monitors heart abnormalities. The device continuously records an electrocardiogram (ECG) for a period of time. The monitor records the ECG while you perform your daily activities. Holter monitoring is a painless monitoring procedure.

Holter monitors are used to detect arrhythmias (irregular heart beats and palpitations) and to detect ischemia (a local, temporary deficiency of blood supply to the heart)

How is the Holter Monitor used?

The Holter Monitor is a portable device that is worn by the patient under the clothing. Several adhesive-backed monitoring electrodes are attached to the skin (chest hair is shaved for the placement of electrodes). These electrodes, or "leads" capture your heart's electrical signals. The electrodes are typically attached to a small tape recorder that record these electrical signals. You will be asked to keep a record of your daily activities in a journal or diary. When the monitoring period is done, you will return to the medical facility, and the electrodes will be removed. A medical professional will review the recordings and your journal for any abnormalities.

Your doctor will discuss the results of the monitoring procedure with you. Occasionally, the monitoring procedure may need to be repeated.

What are the risks?

The procedure is painless. Some patients experience minor skin irritation due to the adhesive used to attach the electrodes, or the gel used. If you experience any burning in the area where the electrodes are attached, contact your doctor. Let your doctor or the doctor's staff know if you have had any previous problems with irritation associated with the placement of electrodes.