

Holter Monitor

What is a Holter monitor?

A Holter monitor is a device that continuously records the electrical activity of your heart on a tape cassette or digital memory device for 24 to 48 hours. You wear the monitor and use an event marker on the device to mark when you have symptoms or to note an event. A Holter monitor is also called a continuous ambulatory electrocardiographic monitor (AEM).

When is it used?

Holter monitors are mostly used to observe and record abnormal heart rhythms. They are sometimes used to look for times when the heart muscle is not getting enough blood flow through the coronary arteries.

Symptoms such as dizziness, palpitations, shortness of breath, fainting spells, and chest pain may have many different causes. A Holter monitor is used to find out if your heart is causing your symptoms. The Holter monitor checks your heart rhythm while you are performing your usual daily activities.

The importance of irregular heartbeats depends on:

- if they occur at the same time that you have symptoms
- how often they occur
- how long they last
- the type of pattern they produce.

If you are taking medicines for a heart problem, a Holter monitor can be used to see how well they are working.

The Holter monitor can alert your healthcare provider to possible problems and help your provider decide on or change your treatment.

What happens during the procedure?

In the healthcare provider's office, the hospital, or clinic you will be asked to take off your clothes down to the waist. Men will have parts of their chest hair shaved. Sticky electrodes will be put on your chest. The electrodes are attached to a small tape recorder or digital memory device. You can then carry the recorder on a belt or shoulder strap.

You will be given a diary to record your activities or symptoms for the next 24 or 48 hours. It is very important that you write down your activities and symptoms.

Wear loosely fitting clothes while wearing the monitor. Do

not shower while wearing the monitor.

What happens after the procedure?

When you return to the office or clinic, your provider will remove the electrodes and review your diary and the information that has been recorded by the monitor. Your provider will discuss the results with you at your next visit, or sooner if needed. You may need to wear a Holter monitor more than once, for example, if you switch to a new medicine.

When should I call my healthcare provider?

Call your provider right away if:

- You have any change or worsening of pain or symptoms.

Call during office hours if:

- You have questions about the procedure or its result.
- You want to make another appointment.

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Cardiac Event Monitoring

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