

EKG

What is an EKG?

An electrocardiogram, also called ECG's or EKG's record the electrical signals in your heart at the moment the test is being performed. They are noninvasive, quick, and painless. A 12-lead EKG gathers information from 12 different areas of the heart to help pinpoint specific areas of the heart that may be having irregularities at the time of testing.

Why is an EKG performed?

An EKG can help detect abnormalities occurring with the heart such as arrhythmias, blocked or narrowed arteries, heart attack, structural problems with the heart chambers, or previous heart attacks. Some abnormal heart rhythms come and go, so your doctor may have you undergo a different type of heart rhythm monitoring, such as with a Holter monitor, to help diagnose the cause of your symptoms.

How do I prepare for an EKG?

No special preparations are necessary for a standard electrocardiogram. Tell your doctor about any medications and supplements you're taking because some can affect the results of your test.

Some areas of the chest may need to be shaved to ensure the electrodes stick to the chest areas.

What should I expect during an EKG?

You will be asked to remove your top to allow access to the chest area to place the electrodes in the proper position.

Then you'll lie on an examining table while 10 electrodes are put around the left breast and chest areas.

Once the electrodes are in place, the wires attached to the monitor will be connected.

You will be asked to lie still. Any shivering, movement or talking during the test may cause artifact interference with the test results.

The computer will take a picture in less than a minute and display the EKG rhythm for your physician to interpret.

How long does an EKG take?

Approximately 10-15 minutes' total including preparation and capturing a rhythm strip.

Are there any risks or side effects with an EKG?

An electrocardiogram is a safe procedure. You'll have no risk of getting an electrical shock during the test because the electrodes placed on your body don't emit electricity. They only record the electrical activity of your heart.

You may have minor discomfort, similar to removing a bandage, when the electrodes are removed. Rarely, a reaction to the electrode adhesive may cause redness or swelling where the patches were placed.

How will my results be communicated?

After your EKG is completed, the results will be immediately sent to your physician for interpretation. Your physician can explain to you the meaning of your test results and any additional next steps for your treatment and care plan if necessary.

How can I get a copy of my results?

EKG reports can be made available for you through medical records. Please allow 24 hours for record requests. Contact the Medical Records department for all EKG requests at 540-785-7768.