

# **Holter Monitor**

## **What is a holter monitor?**

A Holter monitor is a small, wearable device that keeps track of your heart rhythm. Your doctor may want you to wear a holter monitor for one to five days. During that time, the device records all of your heartbeats.

Your doctor uses information captured on the holter monitor to figure out if you have a heart rhythm problem. If standard holter monitoring doesn't capture your irregular heartbeat, your doctor may suggest further tests.

## **Why is a holter monitor ordered?**

If your signs and symptoms suggest that an occasionally irregular heart rhythm may be causing your condition, your doctor may recommend that you wear a holter monitor for a day or so. Over that time, the holter monitor may be able to detect irregularities in your heart rhythm.

## **How do I prepare for a holter monitor?**

If your doctor recommends Holter monitoring, you'll have the device placed during a scheduled appointment. Unless your doctor tells you otherwise, plan to bathe before this appointment. Most monitors can't be removed and must be kept dry once monitoring begins.

A technician will place the device on your chest near your heart. This device is about the size of an oblong flat egg. For men, a small amount of hair may be shaved to make sure the device will stick.

You'll be instructed to keep a diary of all the activities you do while wearing the monitor. It's particularly important to record in the diary any symptoms of palpitations, skipped heartbeats, shortness of breath, chest pain or lightheadedness. You'll usually be given a small pamphlet to help you record your activities and any symptoms.

The device is water-resistant, so it can be worn while showering. It is not water-proof so no swimming or submerging the device in water. It is best to keep your back turned while in the shower.

Once your monitor is fitted and you've received instructions on how to wear it, you can leave your doctor's office and resume your normal activities.

## **What should I expect during placement of a holter monitor?**

Holter monitoring is painless and noninvasive. You can hide the device under your clothes.

While you wear a holter monitor, you can carry out your usual daily activities. Your doctor will tell you how long you'll need to wear the monitor. It may vary from 24 hours to 5 days, depending on what condition your doctor suspects you have or how frequently you have symptoms of a heart problem. Once your monitoring begins, don't remove the holter

monitor until testing is complete. The technician will give you that information during placement of the device.

You'll be asked to keep a diary of all your daily activities while you're wearing the monitor. Write down what activities you do and exactly what time you do them. Also write down any symptoms you have while you're wearing the monitor, such as chest pain, shortness of breath or skipped heartbeats.

Your doctor can compare data from the holter monitor recorder with your diary, which can help diagnose your condition.

Once your monitoring period is over, you'll return the device to your doctor's office, along with the diary you kept while you wore the holter monitor. Your doctor will compare the data from the recorder and the activities and symptoms you wrote down.

### **Are there any risks or side effects with a holter monitor?**

There are no significant risks involved in wearing a holter monitor other than possible discomfort or skin irritation where the device is placed.

### **How will my results be communicated?**

After your doctor has looked at the results of the holter monitor recorder and what you've written in your activity diary, he or she will talk to you about your results. The information from the holter monitor may reveal that you have a heart condition, or your doctor may need more tests to find out what may be causing your symptoms.

In some cases, your doctor may not be able to diagnose your condition based on the results of the holter monitor test, especially if you didn't have any irregular heart rhythms while you wore the monitor.

### **How can I get a copy of my results?**

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