



**University  
Hospitals Sussex**  
NHS Foundation Trust

# Ambulatory ECG monitoring

Cardiology

Patient information

## **What is this information about?**

This information tells you what an ambulatory ECG monitor is; how it will be attached to your body; and how to return your monitor after you have finished wearing it. It also tells you how you will be told the results from your monitor.

## **Why have I been given this information?**

You have been given this information because you are going to be fitted with a monitor. This is so that your doctor can see what your heart does over a period of time, to identify if something isn't right.

## **What is an ambulatory ECG monitor?**

ECG stands for electrocardiogram.

An ambulatory ECG monitor is also known as a Holter monitor.

It is a portable device that records the electrical activity of your heart over a 24-hour, 48-hour or seven-day period, depending on what your doctor has requested.

You wear the device all day and all night.

## **Why do I need an ambulatory ECG monitor?**

An ECG monitor detects any abnormalities or irregularities (things that aren't right) in your heart's rhythm. These may not be captured during a standard ECG (electrocardiogram).

## **How is the monitor attached to my body?**

The device has three electrodes or stickers that are attached to your chest. These are connected to a small recording device, which is usually clipped onto your waistband, or carried in a pocket. The electrodes then can detect the electrical signals produced by your heart as it beats.

## **How long does the appointment to fit the monitor take?**

The whole process of fitting the monitor typically takes around 10 to 15 minutes. This includes a discussion with the cardiac physiologist, who will answer any questions that you have about wearing the monitor.

Before the electrodes and stickers are attached to you, your skin will be cleaned with an alcohol wipe. This usually takes a couple of minutes.

## **Do I need to undress for the appointment?**

You will not need to undress fully but you will need to expose your chest area. This allows the physiologist to properly prep your skin and attach electrodes to you.

It is best to wear clothes that allow easy access to your chest area, such as a shirt with buttons or loose-fitting top.

## **When I am wearing the monitor, can I shower or have a bath?**

The monitor is not waterproof, so it is important that it does not get wet.

If you are having a 24-hour or 48-hour monitor fitted you will not be able to bath or shower while you are wearing the monitor.

If you are fitted with a 7-day monitor, you will be able to take the monitor off once a day so you can wash. You will be given instructions, as well as extra electrodes, to help you to remove and re-fit the device each day.

## **What should I do if ones of the electrodes or stickers come off?**

If one of the electrodes comes off, re-stick it to your chest, as close as possible to where it was stuck before. You will be given a diagram of where the electrodes go on the chest.

Make sure your skin is clean and dry before re-attaching the electrode.

You will not lose any recording data if only one or two electrodes come off for a short period of time.

## What do I need to do after the monitoring period is up?

After the monitoring period is up, you will need to return the monitor to the Cardiac Diagnostic Department. You can ask your cardiac physiologist where to hand it back: this is usually at a drop off point at the reception.

## What happens after I drop it back?

When you drop the monitor back, the physiologists will collect the device. They will download it onto their software to analyse the information on it. They will report the findings to your doctor who has referred you for the test.

## When will I get my results?

The report will be sent to the doctor who referred you for these tests. They will contact you to discuss the results.

## Who can I contact for further information and advice?

If you have any enquiries while wearing your monitor, please contact the Cardiac Physiology Team.

### Cardiac Physiology Team

**01273 696955 Ext. 64211**

If you have any enquiries about your results please contact the department where the referral was originally made.

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