

HOLTER MONITORING

What is a Holter monitor?

A Holter monitor is a battery operated device used to record the heart's electrical activity (electrocardiogram – ECG) over a 24 hour period.

Why have a Holter monitor?

Some cardiac problems occur intermittently or when doing certain activities. A continuous 24 hour recording is more likely to detect these abnormalities than a resting ECG with your doctor.

The electrical problems encountered usually involve irregular/ extra heart beats or abnormal heart rhythms. Their importance can depend upon when they occur, how often they occur, how long they last and if they coincide with your symptoms. The Holter monitor enables the recording and diagnosis of these events (palpitations).

Other symptoms such as dizziness (pre syncope), fainting (syncope) and chest pain may be associated with electrical abnormalities.

The efficiency of current medical treatments on electrical abnormalities can also be assessed by wearing a Holter, as well as how implantable pacemakers

respond over a 24 hour period and any potential malfunctions.

Preparation for the test

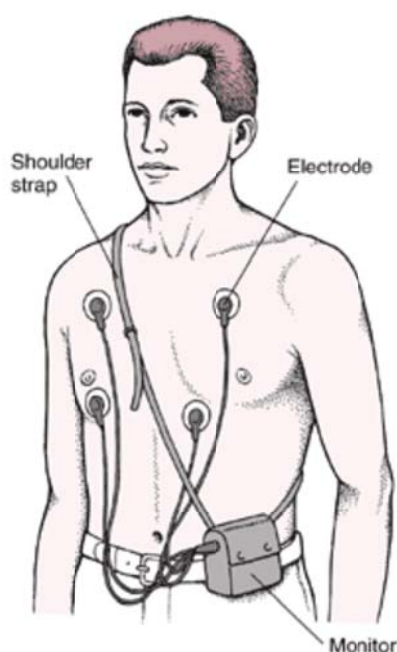
Take your medication as usual unless you are told otherwise by your doctor. As medications can affect your heart rhythm etc, please bring along a list of all your current medications. **You will be unable to shower whilst the Holter is fitted, so have a shower or bath before your appointment.**

A loose blouse or shirt is advised as it will allow the Holter to be worn more comfortably.

How is a Holter monitor put on?

Several areas of your chest may be shaved and cleaned. To these areas electrodes will be applied, which then attach wires to the monitor itself. The monitor is worn over your shoulder in its own carry pouch. The device is light weight and the only feeling you may get is a slight itch from the electrodes.

Before you leave, you will be given a time at which you will need to return the Holter and you may also be shown how to take the recorder off if necessary.



Risks

There are no associated risks involved with Holter monitoring. The electrodes on your skin detect the electrical signals from your heart. At no time is electricity sent through your body, and there is no possibility of an electric shock.

Once the Holter monitor is on

While wearing the recorder continue with all of your normal daily activities. You will be asked to keep a diary of any symptoms you may experience over the 24 hour recording period. This will entail making a note of the time, the actual symptom you experienced, and what activity you were doing at the time of your symptom.

Mild to moderate exercise is encouraged although excessive perspiration may cause the electrodes to fall off. Remember, you cannot have a shower whilst the monitor is on. When you sleep, it is best to find a

position where there is no pressure on the chest electrodes or the attached wires.

If any of these come loose, reattach the wire and/or press the electrode firmly back on the skin (a band aid or tape may also help) and record on your symptom sheet the time it was reconnected.

Return the Holter Monitor and the symptom diary at the arranged time, where it can then be analysed. A full report will then be sent to your doctor.

Holter Monitors are not only performed at our office at 12 Grove St, Cairns North, but also at QML Pathology in Atherton, Innisfail, Port Douglas and at SNP Pathology in Yungaburra.

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