



PATIENT INFORMATION SHEET

Holter (24hr) ECG recording

The Holter recorder is used to record the heart's electrical activity (ECG or Electrocardiogram) during daily life including sleep. It is a continuous recording of the ECG using 5 electrodes which we attach to the skin. The monitor we use is able to build a reconstruction of the 12 Lead ECG we do in the office as part of the consultation, but gives us important additional information about heart rhythm that we cannot obtain during a visit to our Consulting rooms.

Why is it done?

- **Diagnosis of Heart Rhythm Disorders.** Patients may experience palpitations (awareness of the heart beating unusually, including fast and irregularly). Dizzy spells can be heart related when the heart beats unusually quickly or slowly. We are able to record what the heart's rhythm is doing at the time symptoms occur, to aid diagnosis of the condition.
- **Detecting Asymptomatic Heart Rhythm Disorders.** There is a range of normal changes in the heart rhythm, but there are a number of heart rhythm changes which patients are not aware of, such as atrial fibrillation (AF), atrial tachycardia and ventricular tachycardia (VT), which can be found during a 24hr ECG recording.
- **Monitoring Effects of Treatment.** There are many reasons why your doctor needs to look at the effect of drug treatment on heart rhythm - one common one is control of the heart rate in those with atrial fibrillation during daily life. We sometimes look for silent angina (ischaemia) using the Holter recorder which is not a heart rhythm problem but one which shows on the ECG by changes in what is called the 'ST-segment'.

How is it done?

One of our technicians attaches five paper electrodes to the skin after gently removing the surface dry and hard skin so a good electrical contact can be made. These electrodes are connected by a cable to a small, light, battery powered recorder (Phillips, DigiTrak).

PHILLIPS DIGITRAK HOLTER RECORDER



What clothing and other preparations do I need?

There is no need to fast and you should continue all other activities. It is very important that we know what medications are being taken at the time we do the test. An easy way is to bring all your medications with you to the first appointment.

The recorder and connecting wires are usually hidden under your normal clothing. The appointment time takes about 20 to 30 minutes at the first visit.

You cannot bathe or shower during the test as the device is not waterproof. You should take part in all other life activities.

The recorder has a button which you need to press to record any symptoms you experience such as palpitations, dizziness or chest discomforts, and we also ask that you complete a diary of what you felt, the time of day and what you were doing at the time you experienced the symptoms.

Normally the recorder is removed in our office but it can be removed, switched off and brought to the office by someone else for you if that is more convenient.

Our technical staff will analyse the recording and prepare a preliminary report which will be reviewed and finalised by a cardiologist before being sent to your doctor. This is a time consuming process which is generally not done while you are there but after you leave the office.

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