AMBULATORY HOLTER AND EVENT MONITORING

Recording Your Heartbeat
What Are Holter and Event Monitoring?

Holter monitoring and event monitoring are two ways to record your heartbeat as you go about your daily activities. This monitoring helps your doctor evaluate the functioning of your heart. You may be given either type of heart monitor in a hospital, test center, or doctor’s office.

The Devices

Each type of monitoring uses a small battery-powered device that you carry with you. The device creates a record of the rate and rhythm of your heartbeat called an electrocardiogram (ECG). Which type of monitor you receive will depend on how often you have an irregular heartbeat.

- **A Holter monitor** is worn for 24 to 48 hours. It makes a continuous record of your heartbeat during this time.
- **An event monitor** is used for longer than a Holter monitor. It can be used for 30 days or more. When the user feels an irregular heartbeat or other symptoms, he or she tells the device to make a permanent record of the heartbeat.

Why Monitoring Is Done

Your doctor uses the ECG created by the monitors to help with the following:

- Detect arrhythmias (abnormal heart rhythms) that occur during certain activities. These are heartbeats that are too fast, too slow, or irregular.
- Evaluate symptoms such as dizziness, chest pain, or fainting.
- Monitor how well arrhythmia treatments are working.
- Monitor how certain medications affect heart rhythm.
Your Holter Monitor
When you receive a Holter monitor, small painless pads (electrodes) are put on your chest. These connect to the lightweight recording unit, which attaches to a belt or shoulder strap. You need to keep the device on for at least 24 hours.

While wearing a Holter monitor:
• Try to sleep on your back.
• Don’t shower (a sponge bath is okay).
• Follow your normal routine as closely as possible.
• Be sure to keep an accurate diary. This will help your doctor make a diagnosis.

You’ll be shown how to use your monitor.
Your Event Monitor

The most common type of event monitor is called a loop monitor. It is the size of a pager and has electrodes that attach to your chest. When you feel symptoms, you press a button and the monitor records your heartbeat. Other types of event monitors are worn on your wrist or carried in a purse or pocket. When you feel symptoms, you activate the device by pressing a button or holding the monitor to your chest.

While using an event monitor:

• Be sure to have your monitor with you at all times.
• Activate the monitor when you feel ANY symptoms, not just an irregular heartbeat.
• Be sure to keep an accurate diary. This will help your doctor make a diagnosis.

Holter Monitor

In the diary:

• Write in the time of day for each entry you make.
• Note each change in activity, including when you take medication.
• Note any symptoms you feel.

Event Monitor

In the diary:

• Write in the date and time for each entry you make.
• Note any symptoms you feel and what you are doing at that time.
• Note when you take your medication.
Call Your Healthcare Provider If:

- You have severe dizziness, chest pain, or other severe symptoms (seek attention right away).
- You have itching, pain, redness, or blistering on the skin around or under the electrode patches.
- An electrode falls off or the unit makes noise.

When Using a Monitor
Stay away from electric blankets, garage door openers, microwave ovens, magnets, metal detectors, and high-voltage areas such as power lines. They may affect the recording.

Sample Holter Monitor Diary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Symptom</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7:00 am</td>
<td>took medicine</td>
<td>none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:30 am</td>
<td>ate breakfast</td>
<td>none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:00 am</td>
<td>drove to work</td>
<td>heart beat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>faster</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:00 am</td>
<td>meeting with</td>
<td>felt lighthead-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>boss</td>
<td>ed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sample Holter Monitor Diary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Symptom</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>May 12</td>
<td>8:00 am</td>
<td>got dressed</td>
<td>felt dizzy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 15</td>
<td>9:15 am</td>
<td>drove to work</td>
<td>mild chest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 21</td>
<td>5:56 pm</td>
<td>shopping</td>
<td>heart beat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>faster</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Your diary entries will differ from the samples shown above.
Your Test Results
You will be told how to return the monitor and data. A computer is usually used to analyze the data. Then a report is prepared for your doctor, who will discuss the results with you.