

Holter Monitor

What is a Holter Monitor?

A Holter Monitor is a device that records your heart beats. The device records every heartbeat over approximately 24 hours. The device contains electrodes, wires and a small machine that attaches to your waistband.

Why would I need a Holter Monitor?

You may need a Holter Monitor if your doctor thinks there could be a problem with your heart rate or rhythm. You might have symptoms such as:

- Fainting
- Dizziness
- Shortness of breath
- Chest pain
- Irregular heartbeat (arrhythmia)

Even if you've had an ECG, you may still need to wear a Holter Monitor. ECGs only capture your heartbeat for a short time - which isn't always long enough to identify potential problem.

What happens during a Holter Monitor recording?

During a Holter Monitor recording you will be fitted with a small device which can be clipped onto your waist or belt. The device is connected to five leads which are attached to sensors on your chest as shown in the diagram below.

While the device is fitted, you'll need to:

- Wear it during your usual activities
- Keep it on at all times, even during sleep
- Never take it off
- Keep a diary of all your daily activities and the time you did them
- Record any specific symptoms you feel (dizziness, light-headedness, chest pain, shortness of breath)
- Only change single use electrodes if absolutely necessary

Patients wear the device for either 24 hours or for 7 days, depending on what your cardiologist recommends. The information is then downloaded onto a computer and analysed. A report is usually available within 48 hours.

How do I prepare for a Holter Monitor?

A 24-hour Holter Monitor does not require any specific preparation however we do advise patients to come to their appointment showered as you will not be able to get the device wet while it's on.

The hair on your chest may need to be shaved to help the electrodes stick to your skin.

Patients who will be wearing a 7-day Holter Monitor will receive detailed instructions prior to their appointment on how to manage the device and re-attach electrodes after showering.

What are the risks with a Holter Monitor?

A Holter Monitor is a safe and painless test with no significant risks. The electrodes used are hypoallergenic so you should not experience any skin irritation. If any irritation does occur, you can let the skin rest when showering and replace the electrodes afterwards in a slightly different position as before. If you do think you will need to take a shower, ensure to ask staff for extra electrodes before you leave your appointment.

It will not interfere with any other electronic devices.

