

Why Holter Monitoring?

If you have signs or symptoms of a heart problem, such as an irregular heartbeat (arrhythmia), your doctor may order a test called an electrocardiogram. An electrocardiogram is a brief, noninvasive test that uses electrodes taped to your chest to check your heart's rhythm.

However, sometimes an electrocardiogram doesn't detect any irregularities in your heart rhythm. If your signs and symptoms suggest that an occasionally irregular heart rhythm may be causing your condition, your doctor may recommend that you wear a Holter monitor for a day or so. The Holter monitor may be able to detect irregularities in your heart rhythm that an electrocardiogram couldn't, since an electrocardiogram usually takes only a few minutes.

Your doctor may also order a Holter monitor if you have a heart condition that increases your risk of an abnormal heart rhythm, such as hypertrophic cardiomyopathy. Your doctor may suggest you wear a Holter monitor for a day or two, even if you haven't had any symptoms of an abnormal heartbeat

Definition

A Holter monitor is a small, wearable device that records your heart rhythm. You usually wear a Holter monitor for one to three days. During that time, the device will record all of your heartbeats. A Holter monitor test is usually performed after a traditional test to check your heart rhythm (electrocardiogram) isn't able to give your doctor enough information about your heart's condition.



A Holter monitor has electrodes that are attached to your chest with adhesive and then are connected to a recording device. Your doctor uses information captured on the Holter monitor's recording device to figure out if you have a heart rhythm problem.

While wearing a Holter monitor may be a little inconvenient, it's an important test that may help your doctor diagnose your condition.