

ELECTROCARDIOGRAM

What is an electrocardiogram (ECG or EKG) ?

An electrocardiogram or ECG is a graphic recording of the electrical impulses of the heart. The beating of the heart is controlled by electrical impulses, which normally travel on a smooth path, causing the atria and ventricles (the top and bottom chambers) of the heart to contract in a specific order. This pushes blood through the lungs and body. These impulses are conducted to the external surface of the body where they are detected by electrodes. It is important to realize that the ECG does not depict the actual physical state of the heart or its function, but rather the electrical activity. . These electrical impulses can be disrupted by many heart diseases and disorders including arrhythmias, cardiomyopathy, congenital heart defects, coronary artery disease, heart valve disease and heart attacks.

An ECG is not harmful in any way.

What do I need to do before The test ?

- There are no dietary restrictions prior to this test.
- Please bring all of your current medications with you, or provide us with an accurate list. (include dosage and number of times you take medication in a day). Certain cardiac medications can slow the heart rate, and it will be helpful to know if you are on any of this medication. In contrast, certain cold and sinus medicine can increase your heart rate, and this information will be valuable to your physician.
- Do not wear a one piece jumpsuit, as you will be asked to undress from the waist up. Women will be provided a half gown.

What will happen during the test ?

- A trained medical assistant (or nurse) will place several electrodes (small sticky patches) on your chest, arms and legs. Men may need to have areas of their chest shaved, to ensure that the electrodes stay in place.
- The electrodes are connected by wires to an ECG machine.
- You will be asked to lie still for about five minutes while the ECG machine records the electrical activity of the heart.

What happens after the test ?

- Immediately after the test, the physician can give you a complete interpretation.
- If the test is abnormal or inconclusive, you doctor may order additional tests.

