**What is a Holter Monitor?**

A Holter Monitor is essentially a portable EKG machine with a memory. A complete record of your heart rhythm is stored and later analyzed for abnormal rhythm activity or periods of insufficient oxygen supply to the heart. Holter monitoring is especially valuable when symptoms occur infrequently and are unlikely to be captured during a random EKG.

Common reasons for performing Holter monitoring include: palpitations, dizziness, fainting and fast or slow heart rate.

**Is Holter Monitoring a safe procedure?**

Holter Monitoring is a safe procedure. The monitor is powered by a simple, AA battery, thus it does not give off any electrical impulses. The monitor merely picks up your heart’s natural electrical signal which then generates your heart’s natural cardiac rhythm. This rhythm activity is stored in the monitor. Holter monitoring is performed by specially-trained Cardiopulmonary Rehab staff.

**What should I do before coming in for my Holter Monitor study?**

Please wear button-front or loose, comfortable upper body clothing. Women: please do not wear sports bras as you will not be able to remove it until the Holter Monitor is removed; back or front-closure bras are acceptable.

Please bathe/shower before your appointment; once the Monitor is applied, you will not be able to take a bath or shower. Do not use any creams, powders or oils prior to the procedure.

**How long will the Holter Monitor process take?**

The Holter Monitor procedure will take approximately 30 minutes. Depending on your doctor’s order, you will wear the monitor for 24 or 48 hours.

**What will happen during my Holter Monitor study?**

The quality of the EKG tracing is greatly affected by the thoroughness of skin preparation. Five specific sites on the front chest are cleansed with alcohol; then the skin is gently rubbed with an abrasive pad to remove any dead skin cells. Chest hair may need to be shaved. Electrodes are then placed at the five sites on the chest and five EKG wires are snapped onto the electrodes. The monitor is then connected to the EKG wires, and the monitor is placed in a protective pouch. The monitor can either be suspended around your neck with a strap or clipped to a holder to be worn on your belt.

Patients are encouraged to go about their normal daily activities – even exercise. The idea is to “provoke” any underlying symptoms, and thus capture the event on the continuous EKG. Patients are instructed to press a button on the front of the monitor if they experience any symptoms. This “flags” a specific area on the EKG where the symptom was experienced.

Patients are also asked to track their activities and symptoms in a diary we will provide to you. The information in the diary is then compared with the Holter recording to determine if there is a correlation between the patient’s symptoms and any underlying cardiac rhythm disturbance.

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Thank you for choosing Bay Area Medical Center for your Holter Monitor study.

Your doctor has scheduled you for a Holter Monitor study at Bay Area Medical Center.

Please arrive at: ____________________________

Your appointment is scheduled for: Date ____________________ Time ____________

Please come to the Inpatient Entrance of the hospital and go to the Heart & Vascular Center to check in. Please remember to bring your physician’s order and a list of your current medications with you.
What happens when the study time (either 24 or 48 hours) ends?
You will be instructed to unsnap the wires from the electrodes. The electrodes can be thrown away. All other Holter components (monitor, pouch, strap/belt clip, and diary) should be placed in the ziplock bag we will provide you. Unless otherwise directed, the Holter monitor should be returned to the Heart & Vascular Center.

How Do I Find Out the Results?
At the end of the monitoring period, the monitor is removed and attached to a computer with a special program. The EKG data is downloaded and transmitted via a secure internet site to a remote clinic where the data is scanned and interpreted by a highly-skilled staff (cardiac nurses and technologists). The completed report, along with selected EKG strips, are transmitted back via the same secure internet site to the home computer, printed out, and then archived for later recall.

Credentialed physicians at By Area Medical Center then review and interpret the entire report. The information is provided to your physician, who then relays the results to you.

Most Holter studies reveal normal or common cardiac conditions that are not serious. Further testing depends upon what shows up on the Holter report.

How will I be billed for this?
Please bring your insurance card and referral/authorization form (if necessary) on the day of your appointment. All charges, including those from BAMC and from the doctors who interpret your Holter Monitor study will be submitted to your insurance carrier.

For information on financial counseling or payment questions, call 715-735-8012.

What if I have to cancel my appointment?
Contact BAMC at 715-735-4200 (Ext. 4202) to cancel or reschedule an appointment.

Please notify us one day in advance whenever possible if you cannot make your appointment. This courtesy assists the staff in daily scheduling of other patients who may be waiting for an appointment.