

Electrocardiogram (ECG or EKG)

An EKG is a test that records the electrical activity of the heart. With each heart beat, an electrical impulse travels through the heart. This impulse causes the heart muscle to squeeze and pump blood from the heart.

An EKG will show the doctor if:

- The electrical impulse is normal, slow, fast or irregular.
- The heart is too large or overworked.
- There is damage to the heart muscle from a heart attack.

This test is often done as part of routine care for older people who may be at higher risk for heart disease.

Arrive on time for your test. The test takes about 15 minutes.

To Prepare

- Avoid using lotion the day of the test. The sticky pads, called electrodes, may not stick as well.
- Wear a shirt that buttons up the front for easy placement of the pads on your chest. You may wear a hospital gown.

During the Test

- You will lie down on a table.
- Men may have some of their chest hair shaved.
- 12 pads are placed on your chest, arms and legs.
- The pads are connected to wires that go to the EKG machine.
- Lay still for about 20 seconds as the machine records your heart's activity.
- There is no pain with this test.
- When the EKG is done, the pads and wires will be removed.
- Test results are sent to your doctor. Your doctor will share the results with you.

Talk to the staff if you have any questions or concerns.