

# ELECTROCARDIOGRAM (EKG)

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Your doctor uses the ECG to:

To prepare

What to expect



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## Electrocardiogram (EKG)

ECG is a device used to record on graph paper the electrical activity of the heart. The picture is drawn by a computer from information supplied by the electrodes.

**Your doctor uses the ECG to:**

- Assess your heart rhythm
- Diagnose poor blood flow to the heart muscle (ischemia)
- Diagnose a heart attack
- Diagnose abnormalities of your heart, such as heart chamber enlargement and abnormal electrical conduction

**To prepare**

- Avoid oily or greasy skin creams and lotions the day of the test - they interfere with the electrode-skin contact
- Avoid full-length hosiery, as electrodes need to be placed directly on the legs
- Wear a shirt that can be easily removed to place the leads on the chest

**What to expect**

During a resting ECG, a technician will attach ten electrodes with adhesive pads to the skin of your chest, arms and legs. Men may have chest hair shaved to allow a better connection. You will lie flat while the computer creates a picture, on graph paper, of the electrical impulses traveling through your heart.

It takes about 10 minutes to attach the electrodes and complete the test, but the actual recording takes only a few seconds.

Your ECG patterns will be kept on file for comparison with future ECG recordings.

If you have questions, ask your doctor.

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