

Electrocardiograph



An electrocardiograph (ECG) records the electrical activity of your heart. The ECG machine detects tiny electrical signals that make your heart pump blood around your body.

The ECG machine does not put any electricity into your body.

What happens?

An ECG test takes about 5-10 minutes.

Small metal electrodes are placed on your arms, legs and chest. Wires connect these electrodes to the ECG machine. This machine detects the electrical signals that start each heartbeat and records them onto paper or a computer.

During the test, you lie quietly on a table while the machine records your heart's electrical activity. You will need to lie as still as possible, without talking, and breathe normally.

After the procedure, the electrodes are removed and discarded.

The ECG is painless and harmless.

Why is an electrocardiograph done?

An ECG is done to:

- help find the cause of palpitations or chest pain, dizziness, shortness of breath or fainting
- check how well medicines are working and their effect on the heart
- check how well mechanical devices that are implanted in the heart, such as pacemakers, are working to control abnormal heart activity.

Sometimes an ECG is done as part of routine tests, like before an operation.

