

## Cardiology services

# Having an Ambulatory Holter monitor

## Information for patients, relatives and carers

This leaflet aims to tell you about having an ambulatory holter monitor and answer some of the questions that you or those who care for you may have. It is not meant to replace the discussion between you and your medical team.

### Contacts

From Monday to Friday, between 09.00 and 17.00

Cardiac Investigations Department:      **020 3313 3951** (Hammersmith Hospital)  
   **020 3312 1241** (St Mary's Hospital)  
   **020 3311 1028** (Charing Cross Hospital)

Transport booking team:                      **033 0678 1245**  
   (Monday to Friday: 08.00–20.00,  
   Saturday and Sunday: 10.00–13.00)

For out of hours, please contact NHS **111** for advice and health information.

## What is an ambulatory holter monitor?

An ambulatory holter monitor is a portable and non-invasive (not put inside the body) monitoring device that continuously records your heart electrical rhythm for a period of 24 hours to 72 hours. The ambulatory holter monitoring system is made of a battery component and five electrode leads.

## Why has ambulatory holter monitor been recommended for me?

You might have experienced regular, unexplained episodes of palpitations (when your heart becomes more noticeable) or syncope (loss of consciousness), which an electrocardiogram has not been able to pick up. An ambulatory holter monitor will be particularly helpful to find out if these symptoms are related to your heart.

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## What I need to know before having an ambulatory holter monitor?

### **If you have been unwell**

If you have had vomiting or diarrhoea, a cough, cold or skin infection with or without a fever during the 3 days before your appointment, please contact your cardiac investigations department. The contact details are on page 1.

### **If you need a chaperone and/or an interpreter**

If you need a chaperone (someone to come into your appointment with you) during your appointment, please tell the receptionist when you arrive for your appointment.

If you require an interpreter, please contact your cardiac investigations department three days before your appointment, so we can arrange one for your appointment.

### **Plan your journey**

Many people benefit from planning their journey to the hospital. Knowing your route can help you get there in plenty of time for your appointment.

There are a small number of general and disabled car parking spaces at the different hospitals (except for St Mary's Hospital).

For help with journey planning, please visit: <https://www.imperial.nhs.uk> > our-location > choose the correct hospital > hospital map > parking and <https://www.tfl.gov.uk>.

## If you are not available for your appointment

Please contact your cardiac investigations department immediately if you cannot attend your appointment.

This allows us to

- agree a new appointment date and time with you and
- offer another patient your original appointment

We will always aim to reschedule your appointment to the next available date.

If you are running late for your appointment, please contact your cardiac investigations department to tell them when you think you will arrive.

## What happens if I need transport?

In line with Department of Health guidelines, we have a non-emergency transport service for patients whose clinical condition or mobility makes it very difficult for them to attend hospital without transport assistance.

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Please visit our website for more details <https://www.imperial.nhs.uk> > patients and visitors > help and support > patient transport.

## How should I prepare for an ambulatory holter monitor?

Before coming to the hospital to attend your appointment, it is important for you to

- take your medications as prescribed, unless advised by your cardiologist
- have a shower or bath (please do not use moisturizer or skin lotion on your chest)

You might prefer to shave or remove any hair from the chest area (if possible) on your own. If not, we can do this for you on the day of the appointment.

Please bring only essential items and avoid wearing jewellery or other valuables. We advise that you wear loose-fitting clothing to your appointment.

You might be in the hospital for a couple of hours, so it is a good idea to bring something to read or listen to with a headset or earphones while you wait.

## What happens on the day of my appointment?

Please arrive at the allocated hospital and time stated in your appointment letter.

Note that this will not be the actual time of your ambulatory holter monitor fitting.

<b>Hammersmith Hospital</b>	<b>St Mary's Hospital</b>	<b>Charing Cross Hospital</b>
Cardiac Investigation Unit Ground floor, B block Hammersmith Hospital Du Cane Road London W12 0HS  <b>020 3313 3951</b>	Waller cardiovascular unit Ground floor Mary Stanford Wing St Mary's Hospital Praed Street London W2 1NY  <b>020 3312 1241</b>	Cardiac Investigation Unit Fifth floor Charing Cross Hospital Fulham Palace Road London W6 8RF  <b>020 3311 1028</b>

Please check in at the reception desk when you arrive.

Please tell the receptionist and/or the cardiac physiologist that is fitting your ambulatory holter monitor if you need a chaperone or an interpreter during the fitting.

## The ambulatory holter monitor fitting process

The cardiac physiologist will take you to a room where they will fit your ambulatory holter monitor and explain the fitting process and benefits in detail.

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You might be asked to change into a hospital gown and lie/sit down on the bed/chair.

The cardiac physiologist will prep the skin site by cleaning the area and shaving any chest hair (if necessary). They will then place the five electrode leads onto different positions of your chest using electrode stickers.

The electrode leads are connected to a small recording device that will be placed around your neck using a small pouch or around your waist using an adjustable belt.

Once the ambulatory holter monitor fitting is completed, the cardiac physiologist will start your device recording and give you a diary sheet to write down any symptoms (i.e., palpitations or breathlessness) you may experience while wearing the ambulatory holter monitor.

You will also be given a set of the instructions about how to return the monitor after the stated period of recording.

**Please note you will not be able to have a bath or shower while wearing the device.**

## Do I need to avoid electrical appliances and mobile phones?

No, you do not need to stop using electrical appliances or a mobile phone when you have the ambulatory holter monitor. You can use electrical appliances and phones.

If you require an MRI scan, please check with your cardiac investigations department before your scan.

## What happens after my ambulatory holter monitor?

After the recording period, please return the ambulatory holter monitor to your cardiac investigations department for analysis.

You don't need to switch off the ambulatory holter monitor.

You can take off the ambulatory holter monitor yourself or come to the hospital for the cardiac physiologist to remove it for you.

You may notice some skin irritation or redness around the electrode sticker site. This is normal as your skin may be sensitive after the prolonged period of recording. It is important to keep the skin area clean and dry.

## When will I get the results of my ambulatory blood pressure monitor?

All results of the ambulatory holter monitor are uploaded to your hospital electronic medical notes to be reviewed by the cardiologist.

You can discuss the results of your ambulatory holter monitor with your cardiologist during your outpatient follow-up appointment.

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Depending on the results, your cardiologist may recommend further diagnostic tests.

## How do I make a comment about my visit?

We aim to provide the best possible service and staff will be happy to answer any of the questions you may have. If you have any **suggestions** or **comments** about your visit, please either speak to a member of staff or contact the patient advice and liaison service (**PALS**) on **020 3312 7777** (10.00 – 16.00, Monday to Friday). You can also email PALS at [imperial.pals@nhs.net](mailto:imperial.pals@nhs.net) The PALS team will listen to your concerns, suggestions or queries and is often able to help solve problems on your behalf.

Alternatively, you may wish to complain by contacting our complaints department:

Complaints department, fourth floor, Salton House, St Mary's Hospital, Praed Street  
London W2 1NY

Email: [ICHC-tr.Complaints@nhs.net](mailto:ICHC-tr.Complaints@nhs.net)

Telephone: **020 3312 1337 / 1349**

## Alternative formats

This leaflet can be provided on request in large print or easy read, as a sound recording, in Braille or in alternative languages.

Please email the communications team: [imperial.communications@nhs.net](mailto:imperial.communications@nhs.net)

## Wi-Fi

Wi-Fi is available at our Trust. For more information visit our website: <https://www.imperial.nhs.uk>

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