

Electrocardiogram (ECG)

What is it?

- An electrocardiogram is a diagnostic test that detects cardiac (heart) abnormalities by measuring the electrical activity generated by the heart as it contracts.

Why is it done?

- The ECG can help diagnose a range of conditions including heart arrhythmias, heart enlargement, heart inflammation (pericarditis or myocarditis) and coronary heart disease.

What does it involve?

- The patient removes their jumper, shirt, singlet and/or bra so that electrodes can be attached to your chest and limbs. Women should consider wearing a separate top to their trousers or skirt to allow easy access to the chest. The selected sites cleaned, if necessary for accurate tracings. Electrodes are then attached to the chest, arms and legs. These electrodes detect the electrical currents generated by the heart that are measured and recorded by the electrocardiogram machine. The electrodes are then removed. An ECG is completely painless and non-invasive, as the skin is in no way penetrated. The doctor then can interpret the results

Are there any risks involved?

- The ECG is a safe procedure with no known risks. It does not send electric current to the body. On occasion the patient may be allergic or sensitive to the electrodes causing local skin reddening.

