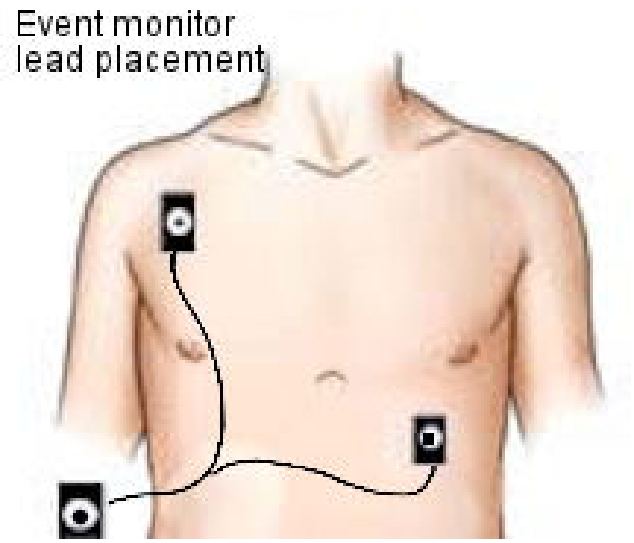
Cardiac Event Monitoring

A cardiac event monitor is a small recording device used to help detect abnormal heart rhythms. When the heart does not beat in a stable or regular pattern, this is called an *arrhythmia*. An arrhythmia may or may not be felt. *Palpitations*, or fast heart beats, may be felt. A cardiac event monitor is used to record the heart rhythm when noticeable symptoms such as the following occur:

- *Palpitations*, such as heart racing or fluttering.
- Dizziness.
- Fainting or lightheadedness.
- Unexplained weakness.



The monitor is wired to two electrodes placed on your chest. Electrodes are flat sticky disks that attach to your skin. The monitor stores the heart rhythm and can be worn for up to 30 days. You will wear the monitor at all times, except when bathing. When you feel symptoms of heart trouble, such as dizziness, weakness, lightheadedness, palpitations, "thumping," shortness of breath or a fluttering or racing heart, you will push a button on the monitor to record the heart rhythm.

Your caregiver will also ask you to keep a diary of your activities, such as walking, doing chores and taking medicine. Be sure to note what you are doing when you experience heart symptoms. This will help your caregiver determine what might be contributing to your symptoms. The information stored in your monitor will be reviewed by your caregiver alongside your diary entries.

LET YOUR CAREGIVERS KNOW ABOUT THE FOLLOWING:

- Allergies to any kind of medical tape.

PROCEDURES

- A technician will prepare your chest for the electrode placement. The technician will show you how to place the electrodes, how to work the monitor, how to replace the batteries and how to fill in your diary. Take time to practice using the monitor before you leave the office. Make sure you understand how to send the information from the monitor to your doctor. This requires a telephone with a land line, not a cellphone.
- If you start to feel lightheaded, dizzy, weak or have fluttering or racing sensations in your heart, press the record button. The monitor is always on and records what happened slightly before you pressed the button, so do not worry about being too late to get good information.

HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS

- Wear your monitor at all times, except when you are in water:
  - Do not get the monitor wet.
  - Take the monitor off when bathing, do not swim or use a hot tub with it on.
- Keep your skin clean, do not put body lotion or moisturizer on your chest.
- It's possible that your skin under the electrodes could become irritated. To keep this from happening, try to put the electrodes in slightly different places on your chest. However, they must remain in the area under your left breast and in the upper right section of your chest.
- Change the electrodes daily or any time they stop sticking to your skin. You might need to use tape to keep them on.
- Make sure the monitor is safely clipped to your clothing or in a location close to your body that your caregiver recommends.

- Keep a diary of your activities, especially what you were doing when you pushed the button to record your heart symptoms.
- Change the batteries as recommended by your caregiver.
- Send the recorded information as recommended by your caregiver. It is important to understand that your caregiver does not have instantaneous results when a recording is made.

SEEK MEDICAL CARE IF:

- Your doctor reviews your records and advises you to come to the office or go to the ER.
- You have questions or concerns about the cardiac event monitor.

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF YOU HAVE:

- Chest pain.
- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath.
- A very fast heart beat or your heart "skips" beats.
- Dizziness which lasts several minutes.
- Fainting or feel you are about to faint.

MAKE SURE YOU:

- Understand these instructions.
- Will watch your condition.
- Will get help right away if you are not doing well or get worse.

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