

What to expect from having an ECG

What does any ECG do?

It looks at the rate and rhythm of your heart.

Before/during the procedure

- You'll lie on an examining table or bed; you will be required to remove your shoe, socks and top garments including t-shirts/jumpers however you will be covered to maintain your dignity. Ladies will also need to remove their tights.
- Electrodes — often 12 to 15 — will be attached to your arms, legs and chest. The electrodes are sticky patches applied with a gel to help detect and conduct the electrical currents of your heart. Please do not apply body lotion as the electrodes will not stick. If you have hair on the parts of your body where the electrodes will be placed, the clinician may need to shave the hair so that the electrodes stick properly.
- You can breathe normally during the electrocardiogram. Make sure you're warm and ready to lie still, however. Moving, talking or shivering may distort the test results. A standard ECG takes just a few minutes.

After the procedure

- Usually, your doctor will be able to tell you the results of your ECG the same day it's performed. If your electrocardiogram is normal, you may not need any other tests. If the results show there's a problem with your heart, you may need a repeat ECG or other diagnostic tests, such as an echocardiogram. Treatment depends on what's causing your signs and symptoms.

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