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An exercise ECG (sometimes called an exercise tolerance test or stress test) will be done in hospital.You'll be asked to take off the clothes on the top half of your body, behind a screen. You may be given a hospital gown to wear.The healthcare professional will attach sticky patches, called electrodes, to your chest, which are attached to an ECG machine.You'll be asked to walk on a treadmill or cycle on an exercise bike.The exercise will start slowly and then gradually get faster and more difficult. It'll be stopped when you start having symptoms or feel too tired. It usually lasts between 40 and 60 minutes.When the test is over, the healthcare professional will remove the sticky patches from your skin. You might feel some slight discomfort when the patches are taken off, a bit like when you take off a plaster. If you're not able to run or cycle, you'll be given a medicine that raises your heart rate instead of having to do exercise. Home This technique involves continuously recording an electrocardiogram (ECG) over 24 hours. It is usually done as an outpatient and is safe and painless. It can help to diagnose symptoms such as palpitations,which don't happen very often. You will need to make two visits to the hospital once to have the recorder fitted and once to return it. Small sticky patches are put on your chest with wires are attached to these and are taped down. The wires lead to a small portable tape recorder which you wear on a belt round your waist. The whole system is very comfortable and quiet so you should hardly be aware of it. You can do everything you normally do, except have a bath or shower, and it is best to wear loose clothing. The doctor will ask you to spend a normal day and do any activity which might bring on your symptoms. You will also need to keep a simple diary, writing down what activities you do and when, and making a note of any times when you have symptoms such as palpitations or dizzy spells. When the ECG is analysed later, the doctors will pay special attention to the recordings at these times which is why it is important to fill in your diary accurately. Often the doctor will arrange for 24-hour recordings to be made for two or three days in a row (in some cases up to eight days). You will get the results of the monitoring a few days later. A 24-hour ECG recording may show a fast or slow heart rhythm that may need treatment. It can also reassure you if you think you have palpitations but are in fact just over-aware of your normal heartbeat. Back to top Home > Patient Information A-Z > Having a 24 hour, 72 hour or seven day heart monitor Print This Page Download LeafletCardio-Respiratory Department Colchester Hospital Tel: 01206 742 612