



What is an Electrocardiogram (EKG)?

An electrocardiogram, also known as an EKG or ECG, is a non-invasive test to check the electrical activity of your heart. The EKG records heart rhythms. Your doctor diagnoses heart conditions by reading patterns seen on an EKG. This test takes about 5 - 10 minutes.

An EKG shows:

- abnormal heartbeats and rhythms (arrhythmias)
- evidence of a current heart attack and the effects of old heart attacks
- thickening of the heart muscle caused by high blood pressure or other diseases
- parts of the heart that are not getting enough blood supply
- evidence of chemical imbalances within the body

Before Your EKG Test

- **Take your regular medications.**
- **Wear a loose-fitting shirt or blouse to the EKG test.** You are asked to undress from the waist up for this test.
- **If you are a patient in the hospital,** an EKG technician does the test at the bedside.
- **If you are coming from home,** you may walk-in. No appointment is necessary.
- **Bring the requisition form** that your doctor signs and gives to you.

Where Do I Go for the EKG Test?

	Step 1: Register	Step 2: Go To	Drop-in Hours
Pacific Campus	2333 Buchanan Street Admitting, Lobby Level	2333 Buchanan Street Kanbar Cardiac Center Lobby Level, past the lobby and the public elevators	8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (Monday – Friday) 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. (Saturday – Sunday)
California Campus	3700 California Street Outpatient Registration, Lobby Level	3700 California Street Lobby Level, Room G530	8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. (Monday – Friday)
Davies Campus	Castro at Duboce Street Outpatient Registration, North Tower, A Level	South Tower, farthest end of B Level	8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. (Monday – Friday)
St. Luke's Campus	3555 Cesar Chavez St., 4 th Floor, Rm 421	Walk a few yards to adjoining Monteagle Building (1580 Valencia Street, Suite 412)	8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. (Monday – Friday)

During Your EKG Test

- The technician explains the test.
- Body hair may sometimes prevent proper EKG signal recording. The technician may shave a small area in order to place the electrodes.
- The technician places electrodes on your arms, legs, and chest.
- You are encouraged to lie quietly without moving during this test.
- EKG is a completely painless test. You will not feel any discomfort.

After Your EKG Test

- You may go home and return to your normal activities after the test.
- Your EKG test results are mailed or faxed to your primary doctor and to your cardiologist (if you have one).
- Your doctor speaks to you about more testing, if needed.

More Ways to Learn

- Go to www.cpmc.org/learning.
- Visit the American Heart Association Web site at www.americanheart.org.

Frequently Asked Questions

Question: What is an electrocardiogram (EKG)?

Answer: An EKG is a recording of the electrical activity of your heart.

Question: How long will the test take?

Answer: An EKG takes about 5 - 10 minutes.

Question: Will I feel any discomfort with an EKG test?

Answer: You will not feel any discomfort. An EKG is a completely painless test.