

Telemetry

What is telemetry?

Telemetry is a way of monitoring your heart while you are in the hospital.

It is used to:

- watch the pattern of your heartbeats
- find any heart problems you may have with your heartbeat
- see how well your medications are working

How does telemetry work?

The telemetry unit has 5 coloured wires attached to it. The nurse connects the wires to 5 sticky pads placed on your chest.

The wires:

- pick up electrical signals from your heart and
- send the signals to the telemetry unit



The telemetry unit changes the signals into pictures of each heartbeat. The pictures are sent to a monitor that looks like a television screen. The monitor displays the picture of your heartbeat continuously and trained nurses watch the monitor 24 hours a day.

The monitor collects information about your heart. Your doctor uses this information to help decide what your heart problem is and the best treatment for you.

The telemetry unit

Each telemetry unit has a number on it. The number is assigned to one patient. This allows the nurses watching the monitor know how to identify you.

The telemetry unit is placed in a white cloth holder. Your nurse shows you how to put your unit in the cloth holder and wear it. Your nurse changes the batteries of the telemetry unit every day.

How long do I wear the telemetry unit?

Your doctor decides how long you wear the telemetry unit.

Do not take the telemetry unit off until a nurse or doctor tells you.

Can I shower or take a bath while wearing the telemetry unit?

You cannot get the telemetry unit wet. Let the nurse know when you plan to wash or have a shower. Before the unit is taken off, the nurse who is watching the monitor is told that you are taking the telemetry unit off to wash or shower. Your nurse then helps you take the telemetry unit and sticky pads off.

After you wash or shower, your nurse helps you put the telemetry unit back on again.

What about the sticky pads?

Your nurse changes the sticky pads every day to keep your skin healthy. Your skin is washed and new sticky pads are put on.

If, at any time a sticky pad falls off, do not try and replace it yourself. Let your nurse know so he or she can put a new sticky pad on your chest in the right place.

Let your nurse know if your skin gets red or feels itchy from the pads.

If you are a male patient, a small area of your chest may have to be shaved so that the pad sticks.

Can I leave the nursing unit?

You cannot leave the nursing unit without talking to your nurse first. Your nurse needs to talk to your doctor to decide if it is safe to have the telemetry unit removed.

If you leave the nursing unit without anyone knowing, the nurse who is watching the monitor is not able to see what your heart is doing. If anything happened to you, the nurse would not know and would not be able to get help for you.

What happens if I have to leave the nursing unit for a test?

When the porter comes to take you for the test, make sure you let your nurse know before you leave. Your nurse takes the telemetry unit off and tells the nurse who is watching the monitor that you have left the unit for a test. Your nurse puts the telemetry unit back on when you come back from the test.

What does the picture on the telemetry unit mean?

When you look at the telemetry unit you see a picture of rib bones, called a ribcage, inside a chest. The 5 coloured circles show where the sticky pads are placed on your chest.

When is the telemetry unit cleaned?

The telemetry unit and wires are disinfected after each patient use. The unit does not need cleaning while you are using it unless it becomes soiled.

Will a mobile phone or device interfere with the telemetry unit?

Yes. Do not use any mobile phone or other electronic devices near your telemetry box. This may cause interference with your signal. Please make sure your visitors know this as well.

What activity can I do when wearing the telemetry unit?

If it is allowed by your doctor, you can move and walk around as much as you can. The telemetry unit allows you to walk around the nursing unit and be monitored. Make sure you follow your doctor's instructions about how much you can move around.

When should I use the call bell to contact a nurse for help?

Call a nurse right away if:

- you have pain, pressure, discomfort or fluttering in your chest
- you have pain in your face, jaw, arms, neck or back
- you have an upset stomach, nausea, or feel sweaty
- you feel short of breath
- you feel dizzy or like you are going to pass out or faint

