



## The Emily Center

### EKG, ECG, or Electrocardiogram

Diagnostic Test/Exam

Si usted desea esta información en español,  
por favor pídasela a su enfermero o doctor.

#511

Name of Child: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# EKG, ECG, or Electrocardiogram

## What is an EKG?

Every time the heart beats, the muscle of the heart squeezes to pump blood through the body. Each heartbeat is started by a tiny burst of electricity, made in the heart. This burst is called an electrical impulse or wave. The wave travels through the muscle of the heart, and makes it beat.

EKG and ECG stand for electrocardiogram. An EKG measures the electrical waves of the heartbeat. It records these on a strip of paper, so the doctor can look at them.

## Why is it done?

A doctor can look at an EKG record to see:

- how long the wave takes to pass through the heart. This shows if the electrical activity is normal or slow, fast, or irregular.
- if parts of the heart are too large or are overworked.

## How is it done?

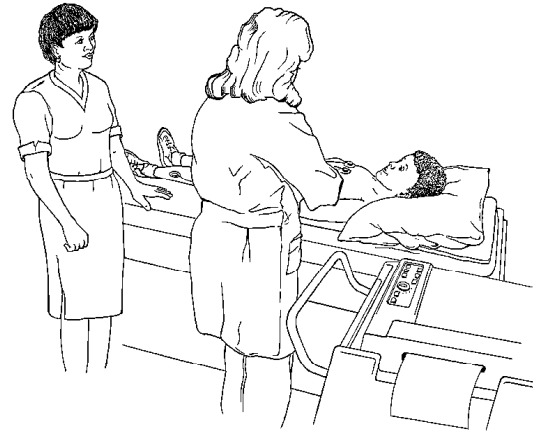
The waves are picked up by sensors called electrodes. These electrodes are patches, that stick on to the skin like a Band-Aid.

Your child will lie down, with no shirt. A nurse or technician will put electrodes on your child's chest, arms, and legs.

The electrodes have wires (leads), which go to the EKG machine. The electrodes sense the heart waves, and send the message through the wires to the EKG machine. The waves are recorded on a moving strip of paper.

While the EKG is recording, your child must lie quietly. This takes only 10 to 20 seconds. Young children may need help feeling safe during this test.

You, or a nurse or technician can help your child stay still.



**A nurse or technician will put electrodes on your child's chest, arms, and legs.**

## Can this test hurt my child?

No. The machine only measures the electrical waves in your child's body. It does not send electricity into the body. An EKG does not hurt. The electrodes are soft, and they go on and pull off easily.

When will we know the results of this test?

The doctor will look at the strip of paper, and tell you what it says about your child's heart.

## Now that you've read this:

- Tell your nurse or doctor how you will get your child ready for this test.  
(Check when done.)



If you have any questions or concerns,  
 call your child's doctor or  call \_\_\_\_\_

If you want to know more about child health and illness,  
visit our library at The Emily Center at Phoenix Children's Hospital  
1919 East Thomas Road  
Phoenix, AZ 85016  
602-546-1400  
[www.phoenixchildrenshospital.com](http://www.phoenixchildrenshospital.com)

**Disclaimer**

The information provided at this site is intended to be general information, and is provided for educational purposes only. It is not intended to take the place of examination, treatment, or consultation with a physician. Phoenix Children's Hospital urges you to contact your physician with any questions you may have about a medical condition.

Friday, August 25, 2006 • DRAFT to family review  
#511 • Written by Sharon Pfeiffer, RN • Illustrated by Dennis Swain





Name of Health Care Provider: \_\_\_\_\_

Number: 511

For office use: Date returned: \_\_\_\_\_  db  nb

## Family Review of Handout

Health care providers: Please teach families with this handout.

Families: Please let us know what you think of this handout.

Would you say this handout is hard to read?  Yes  No

easy to read?  Yes  No

Please circle the parts of the handout that were hard to understand.

Would you say this handout is interesting to read?  Yes  No

Why or why not?

Would you do anything differently after reading  
this handout?  Yes  No

If yes, what?

After reading this handout, do you have any  
questions about the subject?  Yes  No

If yes, what?

Is there anything you don't like about the drawings?

Yes  No

If yes, what?

What changes would you make in this handout to make it better or easier to understand?

Please return your review of this handout to your nurse or doctor or send it to the address below.

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Thank you for helping us!