

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

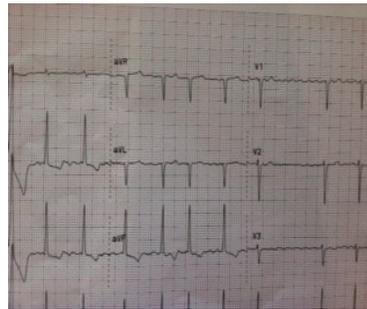
- **EKG**
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What is an Electrocardiogram (EKG) ?

An electrocardiogram or EKG is a picture of the electrical signals of your heart. An EKG does not tell all but can give a lot of information about the heart. EKGs in the early forms began back in the 1800s and have only progressed since then. Now EKGs can easily be done in most office settings in about 5 to 10 minutes. EKGs are safe and provide useful information about your heart and can detect changes in your heart that may not be felt. The EKG process is easy. You will be asked to lie on the exam table with your shirt off or with a hospital gown on. Twelve electrodes (stickers) will be placed on your chest, arms, and legs. If there are hairy parts on the body, these may need to be shaved. These stickers are attached to wires which conduct the electrical



signal back to the EKG machine and onto the paper. During the test, it is important that you lie still so there is no interference. You may breath but try not to talk. The only risk involved is some skin irritation that may occur when the electrodes are placed on the skin. Once the test is completed, if you are seeing your cardiologist, the results should be discussed that day. If you are seeing your primary care doctor, the results may or may not need to be sent to the cardiologist to be read.

If you are just getting an EKG and not seeing a healthcare provider, the results are usually reported that same day. In the hospital, the results are usually discussed when your healthcare provider is seeing you at the bedside. So what does an EKG tell us? First an EKG gives us an accurate assessment of heart rate and heart rhythm. The EKG also gives insight into the electrical conduction of the heart and if the conduction is normal or not. An EKG can detect in some cases a new heart attack, an old heart attack, or changes in the heart that may be related to a blocked artery. If the EKG is normal, that does not mean there is not a heart attack and there is not blockage. If you are having chest pain, you may be asked to stay overnight in the hospital so that blood tests may be done to detect a heart attack. If the blood test is normal and there is no sign of a heart attack, then an exercise or chemical stress test may be needed to detect blockage in the arteries. Cont....Page 3. (2,3,4).

Tip of the Month

Tips for Losing Weight and Keeping it Off

1. Get mentally prepared first.
2. Do not aim to lose more than 10 percent of your weight in 6 months.
3. Regular exercise. The USDA recommends at least 150 minutes of aerobic exercise per week.
4. Don't eliminate fat from the diet but watch how you eat it.
5. Avoid snacking. If snacking is a must, do something healthy like a fruit or vegetable.
6. Eat the foods you crave but not frequently. Use self control here.
7. Weight regularly. This helps keep you on track. (1).



Low Sodium Taco Seasoning



Recipe adapted from Rachel Gurk's Homemade Taco Seasoning Recipe

Ingredients:

1\2 cup plus 2 Tb chili powder
 2.5 tsp garlic powder
 2.5 tsp onion powder
 2.5 tsp red pepper flakes
 2.5 tsp oregano
 5 tsp paprika
 1\4 cup plus 1 Tb cumin
 1.5 Tb Salt Substitute
 3 Tb plus 1 Tsp pepper

Directions:

1. Mix all ingredients together.
2. Store in airtight container.
3. Add 2-3 Tb of mixture plus 1\2 cup of water to 1 lb of cooked meat of your choice for tacos.
4. Simmer over medium heat stirring until there is little liquid left in the pan.
5. Enjoy!

Health Information

Serving size: 2 Tb
 Servings: 11 (Taco Meals)
 Total Fat: 1.6 g
 Sat Fat 0 g
 Sodium 126 mg
 Cholesterol 0 mg
 Carbs 12.3 g
 Protein 1.9 g
 Sugars <1 g
 Fiber 6.9 g
 Potassium 762 mg

Quote of the Month: “All progress takes place outside the comfort zone” Michael John Bobak.

Bible Verse of the Month:

“But he who trusts in the Lord, mercy shall surround him” Psalm 32:10.

Did you Know?



Did you Know that catching abnormal heart rhythms such as atrial fibrillation can take years in some cases? They may be infrequent and elusive. Many individual's symptoms may stop by the time they reach their provider's office or the Emergency Department. For this reason, there are several heart monitors available to help “catch” these abnormal rhythms.

Traditionally, a Holter monitor can be used. A Holter monitor can be used for 24 or 48 hours. The downside is that if the patient does not experience “the symptom” during that time period, the rhythm may not be caught. Another type of monitor is an implantable loop recorder. There are a couple different companies that make these. The newest model however is made by Medtronic and is called the Linq. This monitor is injectable and very small.

It sits in the left chest just under the skin. The battery life is around 3 years. Any heart symptoms may be captured by pressing a button on a remote. A non implantable option is the AliveCor heart monitor, shown to the left, is a newer generation monitor. It is FDA approved for monitor or catching rhythm abnormalities. It is a case that attaches to the back of most smartphones. When symptoms are experienced, the patient simply holds it in their fingertips or over their heart. An EKG tracing will appear. This can then be emailed to the cardiologist or healthcare provider. It can also be saved and viewed during office visits. Individuals may buy the case on the company's website. Please note, these monitors do not replace the need for 12 lead EKG's and these still may be needed despite what may be found on the heart monitor. (5).

An EKG may also be able to detect a structural abnormality. This may include an enlarged chamber of the heart or heart defect.

So when should an EKG be completed? There are several indications for an EKG. One of the most common reasons include symptoms that may be heart related. These symptoms may be passing out, dizziness, shortness of breath, chest pain, and or palpitations. Please note if the EKG does not show an abnormality that would explain these symptoms, more monitoring with a 24 hour monitor or a 30 day monitor may be needed. These monitors are called Holter monitors and Event monitors. The next indication would be after a heart attack or in patients with heart failure. Certain drugs called antiarrhythmic medications require periodic EKG monitoring to assess their effectiveness and safety. These drugs may include Amiodarone, Sotalol, Tikosyn, Flecainide, Rhythmol, and Multaq to name a few. Last, an EKG may be needed to assess pacemaker or defibrillator function in people who are having symptoms such as palpitations, dizziness, or passing out. If there is a suspected device malfunction or failure, an EKG may also be obtained.

To sum up, EKGs are relatively easy, safe, and cost effective ways of detecting heart problems and monitoring ongoing heart conditions. However, they are not all telling, and further testing may be required. (2,3,4).