

# PATIENT INFORMATION LEAFLET

## HAVING AN ECG



### **What is an Electrocardiograph (ECG)?**

An ECG or electrocardiograph is a recording of your heart beat. It is the most common heart test performed.

The heart beats by producing electricity, which travels through the heart, then through all of your muscles and tissues and arrives on the surface of your skin. An ECG machine records this as a graph.

### **Why is an ECG done?**

ECG's are carried out for many reasons. Your doctor or nurse may already have told you why your ECG needs to be recorded. The five most common reasons for recording an ECG are:

- To help diagnose the cause of chest pain
- To know more about the heart rhythm
- To examine the heart with a murmur
- To examine the heart, when blood pressure is high
- For re-assurance

### **Benefits:**

An ECG helps your doctor or nurse to identify any heart problems you may have. In many cases it is used to rule out heart problems.

### **What you need to do to prepare for this investigation**

- Please do not use any body lotions or creams before your investigation.
- The nurse may need to shave where the pads need to be placed.

### **Detail of the test:**

Your ECG will be carried out at the surgery by our Practice Nurse.

You will be asked to undress from the waist up. The ECG pads are also placed on your lower legs so you may be required to remove tights or tight trousers. You will be asked to lie down on a couch. Electrodes and wires from the cardiograph machine will be attached to your arms, legs and chest. Before attaching the electrodes your skin may be wiped with an alcohol swab or possibly shaved.

You will be asked to relax completely, this is very important as your muscles also produce electricity, which may interfere with your ECG recording. Once relaxed, the nurse will operate the cardiograph machine and record your heart beats, this will usually take a few minutes. You will not feel anything. When the recording is complete, the wires and electrodes will be removed and you will be asked to get dressed.

### **After the ECG:**

Your ECG will be reviewed by your Doctor and you will be advised whether any further action is required.