Telemetry is a way to provide constant monitoring of your heart during your hospital stay. It will alert the nurses and physicians of changes in your heart rate as well as your heart rhythm.

How Telemetry Works

The electrodes pick up electrical signals from your heart and send them through the leads to the transmitter. The transmitter turns these signals into pictures of your heartbeat on a computer screen monitor located at the nurses’ station. These monitors are continuously observed by a trained technician (monitor tech) 24 hours per day.

*If you have any chest pain or pressure, no matter how slight, it is essential for you to notify your nurse immediately.

Who Needs Telemetry

Telemetry may be helpful for patient’s with:
- a history of heart or lung surgery
- procedures that create the potential for irregular heart rhythms
- previous or suspected heart or lung disease
- previous or suspected irregular heart rhythms and heartbeats
- fainting episodes that may have been caused by a heart problem
- medications that may change heart rhythms and rates
- pacemakers

Equipment

Five patches (electrodes) are attached to different places on your chest. A wire (lead) is connected to each electrode. The transmitter is the box that is placed in the pocket of your hospital gown or in a pouch you wear around your neck.

Alarms

Sometimes alarms will ring at the monitor station. Some causes for these alarms are:

- Changes in your heart rate or rhythm.
- Repeated movements of the leads (when you brush your teeth).
- Disconnected leads and/or low battery on the transmitter. (It may be necessary to awaken you at night for these reasons.)

The monitor tech will notify your nurse of any changes in your heart rhythm. The nurse may then check your blood pressure, pulse and/or check your telemetry equipment. The nurse will notify your physician as needed.

Common questions asked by patients:

Q. May I walk around in the hallways?
A. Yes. You may walk around the unit. Your monitor will continue to transmit to the monitor tech station throughout the facility. However, please remain on the Telemetry unit should your nurse need to check on you.

Q. May I shower during my stay on the Telemetry unit?
A. Yes. You may shower but the transmitter must be removed while you are in the shower. It will be put back on as soon as you complete your shower.

Q. What is the phone number my family can call to talk with my nurse?
A. They may call 530-4750 and ask for the nurse caring for you.
Glossary of Terms

Normal Sinus Rhythm – the heart’s regular rhythm

Bradycardia – fewer than 60 heartbeats per minute (this is normal for some people)

Tachycardia – more than 100 heartbeats per minute (this is normal for some people)

Atrial Fibrillation (A-fib) – when the atrium of the heart beats irregularly

Coronary Artery Bypass Graft (CABG) – the procedure of bypassing blocked arteries of the heart to increase blood flow to the heart muscle

Pedal Pulses – the pulses in your feet

Angiogram (Heart Catheterization) – the procedure of injecting dye into the arteries of the heart to check for blockage

Angioplasty (Plasty) – the procedure of using a catheter with a balloon end to open blocked arteries in your heart

Oxygen Saturation (O2) – checking the oxygen level in your blood