

IMPLANTABLE LOOP RECORDER

What is the Insertable Loop Recorder (ILR)?

Loop Recorder is an implantable heart monitor that records the heart's electrical activity. Your doctor can use the information recorded by this heart monitor to determine if the cause of your symptoms may be related to an abnormal heart rhythm. Once your doctor has this information, he/she can decide which treatment option is most effective for you.

Smaller than a pack of gum, the ILR is inserted just beneath the skin in the upper chest area in a brief outpatient procedure. After insertion, the monitor can provide information to your doctor for up to 14 months.

Once the ILR is implanted in your upper chest area, it is programmed to continuously monitor your heart's activity in the form of an electrocardiogram (ECG). When an episode occurs, a patient (or family member) immediately places a small hand-held activator over the monitor and presses a button. This records the heart's signal before, during, and after the episode. An ILR can also record abnormal rhythms automatically if programmed to do so by your doctor.

How is the Insertable Loop Recorder (ILR) implanted (and removed)?

ILR is typically a simple procedure where the device is placed under the skin in the upper chest through a small incision using local anesthesia to numb the area.

Once the device is inserted, it is programmed to record the heart signal during a fainting episode. Because the heart monitor is placed under the skin, patients do not have to use sticky recording pads on their skin or worry about connecting any wires. In general, people who get an ILR can perform almost all their normal activities. Patients can swim, bathe, and exercise with their heart monitor without fear of harming it. However, based on your symptoms, your doctor may ask you to limit some of your activities. After the ILR is implanted, your doctor will schedule periodic office or clinic visits.

When heart activity is recorded by the heart monitor during an actual fainting spell your doctor will "read" the signal. If your doctor is satisfied that heart rhythm-related causes may be ruled in or ruled out, the heart monitor is removed in a quick and simple procedure.

What are the advantages of an Insertable Loop Recorder (ILR)?

ILR heart monitor is helpful in determining causes of infrequent fainting or other unexplained symptoms such as dizziness and/or heart palpitations. Other heart monitors that hook-up outside the body can record ECG signals for 30 or 60 days. However, the ILR is designed for long-term use.

Since the ILR can be used for up to 14 months, the chance of capturing your heart signal during an episode is very good. In fact, the ILR allows doctors to determine the cause of symptoms in 43 to 88 percent of patients with recurrent unexplained fainting