

Homework to Prepare for an EKG

Use practice, praise, and play to help your child feel more comfortable with having an EKG.

Practice these steps when your child is in a happy mood. Try to work on the steps a little every day for multiple days or weeks.

First Steps

- Talk about how nice the nurse is. (Example: The nurses are all so nice – they help take care of us.)
- If you have a photo preparation book or video, review it with your child daily, starting a week before the appointment.



Next Steps

- Practice the test on a doll or stuffed animal while your child watches and/or helps. Have the doll lie down on a bed. Practice putting masking tape (one inch strips) on the doll, 8 across the chest, one on each arm, and one on each leg. After all the strips are placed attach colored yarn or string to each piece of tape.
- When your child is in a good mood practice the test with your child. Have your child lie on her back on a bed and practice each of the steps just like you did with the doll.

Final Steps

- When your child is comfortable with the steps of the test, begin having your child practice lying still for 5 seconds and work up to lying still for 30 seconds. You can count or use a timer to help your child understand how long to hold still. Each time your child successfully holds still reward him or her with praise (i.e. good job or a high five).
- Give your child a break between each step.
- Praise your child for being calm and cooperative. If necessary, use a reward system for cooperative behavior.
- If your child tries to push your hands away, redirect your child's hands with a fun activity. For example, tell your child to hold their toy car.
- These steps could challenge your child, but if your child becomes upset, take a break and try again later.

Teaming up with a Therapist

If a therapist works with your child, ask the therapist to work on this homework with your child too.

Coping Skills

While preparing for an EKG and during the test, encourage your child to use coping skills. Coping skills can be used with anything that is difficult for your child. Let your child know these are ways to calm the body and feel better. Choose a coping or relaxation method that you think your child will respond to best:

- Deep breathing - Have your child take 3-5 deep breaths. Encourage your child to watch his or her stomach rise and fall. Blow bubbles or blow into a pinwheel to encourage deep breathing.
- Counting - Count to 10 with your child and encourage participation.
- Pressure - Have your child squeeze both hands together or around a ball. Repeat five times.
- Listen to music – Play soothing music for your child to hear.
- Watch a video - Encourage your child to watch a favorite video to remain calm.
- Picture a favorite place or activity - Describe in detail your child's favorite activity or place and ask your child to imagine it.

