

## St. Luke's Heart Care Services Patient / Family Information

### Electrophysiology Study (EP Study)

#### **What is an Electrophysiology Study (EP Study)?**

An EP study is an accurate and reliable method of evaluating your heart rhythm. You may have experienced symptoms of palpitations, fluttering and/or pounding of your heart. This procedure will help your doctor evaluate your symptoms and determine what the best treatment option is for you.

#### **Why do I need an EP (Electrophysiology) Study?**

If you have been told that you have a problem with the speed or pattern of your heartbeat, the doctor may recommend that you have an EP study to learn more about your heart. Symptoms that you may feel with your heart rate problem are dizziness, weakness, shortness of breath, chest pain or fluttering.

#### **Where is an EP Study performed?**

This procedure is done in a special lab, known as the Electrophysiology (EP Lab). At St. Luke's Hospital this is located on the fourth floor of the Nassif Heart Center.



#### **How long does an EP Study take?**

The EP study can take anywhere from 2-4 hours. The length of time will vary depending on the type of heart rhythm problem you have.

#### **What should I expect before the procedure?**

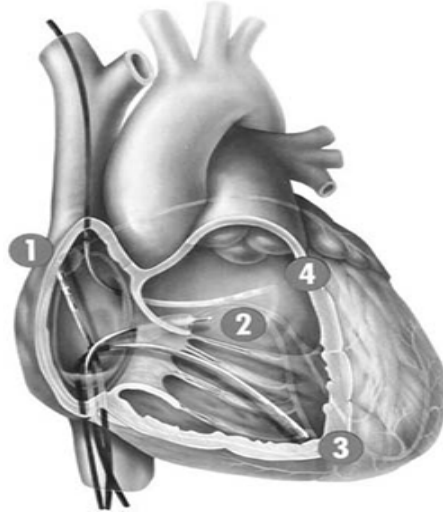
- Instructions on medications, blood tests, and any other testing that is needed, will be provided by your heart doctor's office.
- Do not eat or drink anything at least 8 hours before your procedure.
- The St. Luke's Heart Center will attempt to contact you the day before your procedure to remind you of your arrival time and will also answer any questions that you might have.
- Make arrangements to have someone drive you to and from the hospital.
- Patients will generally be sent home following their EP study, but the heart doctor may want you to spend the night in the hospital if he or she feels it is necessary.

#### **What should I expect the day of the procedure?**

- You will be asked to arrive at the hospital 2 hours before your procedure in order to prepare you for your EP study.
- Fluids and medications will be given to you through an IV.
- The skin in the upper thigh/groin area will be cleaned and clipped if needed.

**What should I expect during the procedure?**

- You will be brought to the EP (electrophysiology) lab, where a nurse will watch your vital signs (heart rate and rhythm, blood pressure, and oxygen level) with monitoring equipment. The nurse caring for you will be close by at all times.
- Your body will be covered with a drape; the only area exposed will be your upper thigh/groin area. This is to maintain a sterile (germ-free) environment.
- Your upper thigh/groin area will be numbed with lidocaine and the doctor will place special catheters into your veins. The doctor will move the catheters to your heart using a video monitor and x-ray equipment.
- To study your heart rhythm, the doctor will use electrical signals that can be sent through the catheters to stimulate your heart rhythm. During this time, you may have chest discomfort or feel like your heart is fluttering; this is normal and will not last long.
- You will be awake for this procedure, IV medications may be given to maintain your comfort.



**1, 2, 3, and 4 represent where the catheters are placed in your heart during the EP study.**

**What should I expect after the procedure?**

- After your EP study the heart doctor will talk to you and your family.
- You will be required to stay in bed for 2 to 6 hours to allow your veins to heal.
- You may go home several hours after the study or you may spend the night. Plan on bringing an overnight bag to the hospital the day of your procedure.

**Treatment Options:**

Depending on the results of your EP study, your doctor will determine the best treatment option for your heart rhythm problem. Treatment options can include medications, pacemaker, defibrillator, and/or a procedure called an ablation.

**Outpatient Instructions:**

The heart doctor that ordered the test for you will call St. Luke's to schedule the procedure. You will be pre-registered for the test so you will not have to register at the Outpatient Registration Desk. Please bring a list of your medications that you are currently taking to the Heart Center on the day of your procedure.

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Exam Date and Time:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Please contact the St. Luke's Heart Center at 319/369-7400 if you have questions regarding your procedure.**