Digitrapper® pH-Z Monitoring: Frequently Asked Questions

It’s important to have as much information as possible, especially when it comes to your health. Listed below are some of the most commonly asked questions about Digitrapper pH-Z monitoring. It is always best to consult with your doctor about all health decisions.

Q: What is Digitrapper pH-Z monitoring?

A: Digitrapper pH-Z monitoring is a 24-hour, catheter-based test that uses a combination of pH and impedance sensors for the identification of reflux at multiple locations including the esophagus and pharynx. Data collected with Digitrapper pH-Z monitoring differentiates acid and non-acid reflux in patients with a variety of symptoms.

Q: What is pH-impedance monitoring?

A: Esophageal pH monitoring is a test that measures how often and how long stomach acid flows into the esophagus during the testing period. It is important to understand the frequency and duration of reflux to determine if your condition may or may not be gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD). Impedance monitoring can detect if the content of the reflux is acidic or non-acidic. While symptoms of acid reflux and non-acid reflux may be similar, it is important to differentiate acid reflux from non-acid reflux because treatment options may be different, including the discontinuation of PPI therapy for patients with non-acid reflux.

Q: Why is pH-impedance monitoring usually performed?

A: pH-impedance monitoring is typically performed to: (1) evaluate symptoms related to GERD such as persistent heartburn, regurgitation, chronic cough and chest pain, (2) evaluate abnormal esophageal acid exposure in the event of a recent negative endoscopy, (3) confirm esophageal reflux prior to anti-reflux surgery or (4) determine the effectiveness of medications that are given to prevent acid reflux.

Q: What can I expect before, during and after the test?

A: Digitrapper pH-Z monitoring involves inserting a very small, flexible catheter through your nostril and placing it in the lower part of the esophagus. The catheter will be secured to your
nose with tape. The external end will be attached to a small recorder that collects data on the acid levels in your esophagus over a 24-hour period. You can either wear the recorder on a belt or carry it attached to a shoulder strap.

You may return home after being instructed on how to operate the recorder and you will be asked to keep a diary of certain events including symptoms such as reflux, heartburn, cough and chest pain, or activities such as periods of sleep, medications and meals. The catheter will not interfere with eating, drinking or breathing. You may drive home after the study since no sedation is required.

Q: Is Digitrapper pH-Z monitoring a good choice for everyone?

A: No, Digitrapper pH-Z monitoring is not for everyone. Digitrapper pH-Z should not be used in patients with an inability to tolerate nasal intubation, patients with significant bleeding disorders for whom nasal intubation is contraindicated or patients with a known esophageal obstruction preventing passage of the instrument.

The risks of catheter insertion into the nasal passage associated with Digitrapper pH-Z monitoring include discomfort, nasal pain, minor bleeding, runny nose, throat discomfort, irregular heartbeat with dizziness, and perforation. In rare instances, the catheter may shift up or down causing false results, or the catheter may be misdirected into the trachea causing coughing or choking.

*Information on this site should not be used as a substitute for talking with your doctor. Always talk with your doctor about diagnosis and treatment information.*