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Shirt Will Monitor Wearer's Vital Signs

By [Martha Craver](#)

You'll soon be able to wear a shirt that tells your doctor how well your latest prescription is working, whether you're getting enough sleep or if your blood pressure is getting too high.

A diagnostic medical shirt containing six sensors sewn into the fabric may be available for holiday gift giving next year. The LifeShirt from [LifeShirt.com](#) will monitor 40 signals from the wearer's body, transmitting them via a pocket-size computer to a Web site that can be accessed by the patient, a doctor or a loved one.

"The shirt allows for continuous monitoring, so a physician can get a fuller picture of a patient's vital signs over a period of time, not just a snapshot in the doctor's office," says Andrew Behar, the founder of LifeShirt.com. Behar expects the shirt to be available by next September. It will cost about \$100, and the small companion computer will cost about \$150. The computer will also be available for leasing.

LifeShirt is a washable, short-sleeved knit shirt. The sensors can measure not only electrocardiograms and blood pressure but also more subtle signs, such as breathing patterns and heart rhythms, to help detect pain or anxiety levels. Also, the patient can manually enter significant symptoms whenever and wherever they occur, whether in the office, on the golf course or in bed. The shirt is connected to a pocket computer worn on the body that transmits the data via the Internet to LifeShirt.com, where the data are analyzed by physicians and posted to a secure Web site.

LifeShirt will first be aimed at the eldercare market. Behar envisions the elderly having their vital signs continuously monitored by LifeShirt. They would go to a neighborhood clinic, where the data would be uploaded and sent to their doctors. The doctors could then check on how their patients were doing on medication. "If the medication was for hypertension, for example, the sensors would allow the doctor to see whether the dosage was adequate or not by checking the readings," says Dr. Marvin Sackner, who invented the shirt.

Other applications include pain management and sleep studies. For example, a traditional sleep study costs about \$600 a night, but LifeShirt will be able to do the job for about \$25-\$30 a night, according to Behar. "It also may allow a patient to be discharged from the hospital early, since that patient could still be monitored 24 hours a day," he explains. Or it could be used by a busy, healthy individual to collect the kinds of data gathered during a physical exam. "The shirt could be worn under a business suit and no one would notice," says Behar.

Clinical drug trials may be another possible use for the LifeShirt. Patients in drug trials need to be monitored. "With LifeShirt, drug companies would see on a daily basis how the trial was proceeding," says Behar.

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