



Self-Blood Pressure Monitoring Key Points

Why monitor blood pressure at home?

- To see how well your treatment is working and how you respond to medications
- To see what your readings are like away from the clinic or surgery
- To be sure that you have high blood pressure

Buying a Monitor

- Buy a recommended monitor. Please see our separate list of inexpensive and widely available home BP monitors which are known to be accurate.
- Choose machines that measure from the top of the arm rather than the wrist or finger.
- Monitors may be bought with a standard adult or a large adult cuff.
- Have your blood pressure monitor re-calibrated at least every 2 years to check that it is still accurate. You can do this by sending it back to the manufacturer (there will be a fee)
- Make sure that the monitor you choose has been 'clinically validated' for accuracy. This means it has gone through a series of tests to make sure it gives accurate results.

Before you decide on which monitor to purchase, ask a family member or friend to measure the circumference of your upper arm. Use a tape measure to measure the circumference in the mid portion of the upper arm.

20 – 26cm arm circumference: **Small cuff needed**

28 – 33cm arm circumference: **Standard cuff needed**

34 – 50cm arm circumference **large cuff needed**

When to do your blood pressure readings

- Take readings over three days when you are following your normal routine (not just when you are on holiday or off work!)
- Take a pair of readings in the morning and a pair in the evening:

Two morning readings before you take any pills

Wake up - Put on cuff - 5 minutes rest – Take 1st reading – 1 minute rest – take 2nd reading

Two evening readings (for example when you get home from work)

Put on cuff – 5 minutes rest – Take 1st reading – 1 minute rest – take 2nd reading

Information for Patients

- The measurements should not be concentrated during the evening and do need to include measurements in the morning.

How to do your blood pressure readings

- Wear loose fitting clothing – roll up your sleeve
- Make sure you do not need to use the toilet, and that you have not just eaten a big meal as this can cause your blood pressure to rise for a short time
- Use the same arm for readings, preferably the same arm on which your measurements are taken at your clinic or surgery
- Find the positioning marker on the lower edge of the cuff
- Position the correct size cuff snugly on the arm with the positioning marker over the artery – the cuff should be roughly at the level of your heart
- Sit in a chair with legs uncrossed and back supported
- Rest the arm so it is supported by a table or desk
- Sit quietly for five minutes before taking each reading and do not talk while doing the reading
- Record the blood pressure value on paper or in the memory of the machine – do not change or omit any readings
- Do the four readings (above) a day until you have twelve readings **then stop**
Please bring the readings in with you when you are next in clinic
- If you have a computer, you can enter the readings into the spreadsheet provided by the Blood Pressure Association at:

When should I do another set of readings?

- You should not do readings every day indefinitely
- A set of readings should be done after a period of weeks to months, as guided by your doctor or nurse – typically every 2 to 6 months, depending on your condition
- After a change of medication or starting a drug treatment as guided by your doctor or nurse
- Before your next Hypertension clinic or GP appointment

What should my self-measured or ‘home’ blood pressure be?

- Remember your blood pressure varies considerably, so do not be worried by occasional high readings – the important thing is your average blood pressure
- The important readings are the averages over a period and not individual readings

Information for Patients

- If you have three consecutive readings with the higher (systolic) figure being 200 or more, please seek medical attention
- PLEASE DO NOT change your pills according to individual blood pressure readings – always consult your doctor before making any changes.
- The home average value of less than 135/85 is normal.

How does self or home measured blood pressure compare to blood pressure readings in the surgery or clinic?

In a **clinic or surgery** when your blood pressure is measured by a doctor or nurse it is usually higher, so an **average** value of less than 140/90 is normal

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Please see the attached Daily blood pressure reading dairy.

Daily Blood Pressure Readings

Patient Name: _____

Date	Morning Blood Pressure		Evening Blood Pressure	
	First Reading	Second Reading	First Reading	Second Reading

Information for Patients

Accessibility

To view this information in a different language or use the text-to-speech reader visit www.uhb.nhs.uk, click the yellow and black circular icon in the bottom right of the web page to open the ReachDeck toolbar and then use the search bar to search by the name of the leaflet. If you require this information in another format such as braille or audio please email interpreting.service@uhb.nhs.uk.



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