

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 manufacture (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 - 3 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 - 3 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 three 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:

http://www.bpassoc.org.uk/information/measuring/blood_pressure_readings_bpassoc..xls

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

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 of time 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.
- An average value of less than 130/80 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 / 85 is normal

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Our commitment to confidentiality

We keep personal and clinical information about you to ensure you receive appropriate care and treatment. Everyone working in the NHS has a legal duty to keep information about you confidential.

We will share information with other parts of the NHS to support your healthcare needs, and we will inform your GP of your progress unless you ask us not to. If we need to share information that identifies you with other organisations we will ask for your consent. You can help us by pointing out any information in your records which is wrong or needs updating.

Additional Sources of Information:

Go online and view NHS Choices website for more information about a wide range of health topics <http://www.nhs.uk/Pages/HomePage.aspx>

You may want to email our Health Information Centre:

Health.Informationcentre@uhb.nhs.uk.

Dear Patient

We welcome your views on what you thought of this patient information leaflet, also any suggestions on how you feel we can improve through our feedback link below:

- Patient Information Feedback email: PatientInformation.LeafletFeedback@uhb.nhs.uk

If you wish to make any other comments this can be done through the links listed below:

- Patient Opinion: www.patientopinion.org.uk
- I want great care: www.iwantgreatcare.org (Here you can leave feedback about your doctor)

Information for Patients

Be helpful and respectful: think about what people might want to know about our patient information and this hospital and how your experiences might benefit others. Remember your words must be polite and respectful, and you cannot name individuals on the sites.

If you have any questions you may want to ask about your condition or your treatment or if there is anything you do not understand and you wish to know more about please write them down and your doctor will be more than happy to try and answer them for you.

View Only
Do not
issue to
Patients