



Guide to Accurate Home Blood Pressure Monitoring for Patients

Home blood pressure monitoring begins with the right blood pressure monitor. Check with your doctor's office before purchasing your monitor for the following reasons:

- Many monitors do not give accurate readings, even some that are approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.
- Many insurance plans will pay for blood pressure monitors.
- A monitor that stores blood pressure readings for later review is preferred.
- The monitor should go around the arm (not around the finger or wrist).
- To make sure the blood pressure cuff is the right size for your arm.
- You are measuring your blood pressure in the correct arm.

How to Take Blood Pressure at Home:

Before you start

- Make sure your bladder is empty.
- Avoid smoking, caffeinated drinks (coffee, tea, soda), or exercise within 30 minutes before.
- Sit in a chair that has a straight back (for example, a dining room chair).

Sit correctly

- Sit with your feet flat on the floor and legs uncrossed.
- Place the blood pressure cuff so that the bottom of the cuff is directly above the bend of the elbow.
- Make sure there are no distractions, such as TV, cell phones, and other electronics.

Remain still

- Rest quietly in the chair for 5 minutes before taking blood pressure.
- Keep your arm supported on a flat surface (such as a table), with the upper arm at heart level.

Take multiple readings

- Each day take 2 readings, 1 minute apart in the morning before taking medications, then another 2 readings in the evening before bedtime.
- Measure blood pressure for 3 to 5 days during the week before a clinic visit or when asked by your provider.

Important reminders

- Write all blood pressure readings in a paper or electronic notepad.
- Monitors should be brought to all clinic appointments.
- **Your target blood pressure for home readings is an average of less than 130/80.**

