

Measuring your blood pressure at home

We have asked you to measure your blood pressure at home as having a number of readings from home gives us a much better idea of your usual blood pressure than one or two readings in the surgery. This leaflet is designed to answer the main questions you might have about measuring blood pressure at home but if you have any other questions please ask one of the doctors or nurses in the surgery.

When should I measure my blood pressure?

Usually we will ask you to measure your blood pressure in the morning and evening each day for a week and then make an appointment to discuss the readings. If your GP or nurse has asked you to do something different then please follow that advice.

How should I measure my blood pressure?

Each blood pressure monitor comes with instructions on how to use it. The key points to remember are:

- Before you take your readings, rest for five minutes then sit down in a quiet place, preferably at a desk or table, with your arm resting on a firm surface and your feet flat on the floor
- Put the cuff on following the instructions that came with your monitor making sure that your arm is supported and that the cuff around your arm is at the same level as your heart. You may need to support your arm with a cushion to be sure it is at the correct height. Your arm should be relaxed, not tensed
- When you are taking your reading, keep still and silent. Moving and talking can affect your reading
- Each time you measure your blood pressure, take two readings at least one minute apart and record both readings. Do not be surprised if these readings are different

What does the reading mean?

Blood pressure measures how strongly blood presses against the walls of your arteries (large blood vessels) as it is pumped around your body by your heart. It is measured in millimetres of mercury (mmHg) and it is recorded as two numbers – a higher number and a lower number. The higher number is called the systolic pressure and measures the highest pressure in the blood vessels as the heart beats. The lower number is called the diastolic pressure and measures the lowest pressure between heartbeats.

A reading of 140/90 therefore means you have a systolic pressure of 140mmHg and a diastolic pressure of 90mmHg. You may hear this referred to as a blood pressure of '140 over 90'.

How should I record my blood pressure?

Please record your blood pressure at home for one week. To send in your results you can do one of the following:

- print this document and complete the form on the next page and bring/send this to the surgery
- or you can use our online form to upload and submit your results directly using the website online forms option and completing the Home Blood Pressure Monitoring Online Form

What should my blood pressure readings be?

Ideally your blood pressure should be less than 135/85. It is not unusual to have occasional higher readings but if you are consistently getting readings higher than 150/95 then please book an appointment to see a GP.

Which blood pressure monitor should I buy?

There are many different kinds of home blood pressure monitor, but it is easiest to use a monitor that is fully automatic (digital). Choose one that measures your blood pressure at your upper arm, rather than at your wrist or finger. Upper-arm blood pressure monitors usually give the most accurate and consistent results.

It is important that the home blood pressure monitor you choose has been listed as 'clinically validated' for accuracy by the British Hypertension Society. This means that the digital monitor has gone through a series of tests to make sure it gives results that we can trust. The British Hypertension Society provides a list of all the blood pressure monitors that have been validated for use at home. The complete list is available at

<https://bihsoc.org/br-monitors/for-home-use/>

The cheapest machines cost approximately £20-£25 for example BOOTS upper arm or OMRON basic.

All upper-arm blood pressure monitors will also come with a cuff that you need to wrap around your arm. It is important to use a cuff of the right size. Measure around your upper arm at the midpoint between your shoulder and elbow, and choose your cuff size from the chart below.

Measurement (cm)	Measurement (inches)	Cuff size
18-22 cm	7.1-8.7"	Small
22-32 cm	8.8-12.8"	Medium
32-45 cm	12.8-18"	Large

Most home blood pressure monitors will come with a medium-sized cuff. You may have to order a different-sized cuff separately.

Please either use this chart to record your home blood pressure recordings or go to our online form

Name: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Date of first reading: _____

Requested by: _____ (Name of GP or Practice Nurse)

	Morning		Evening	
	First reading	Second reading	First reading	Second reading
Example	138 / 78	134 / 76	139 / 81	135 / 75
Day 1	/	/	/	/
Day 2	/	/	/	/
Day 3	/	/	/	/
Day 4	/	/	/	/
Day 5	/	/	/	/
Day 6	/	/	/	/
Day 7	/	/	/	/