

# Home Blood Pressure Testing



These guidelines will help you when measuring blood pressure at home.

They are for adults over the age of 16, who are not pregnant or do not have a known irregular heartbeat.

People with an irregular heart rate (arrhythmia) should speak with a member of the team at the Practice to arrange to get their blood pressure checked, as in this situation it can be difficult to get an accurate reading using digital devices.

## How to take an accurate reading on the upper arm:

- Measure your blood pressure at the same time every day, when it is convenient for you to do so
- Get yourself in a comfortable position with your legs uncrossed and your back supported
- Be still and silent whilst the reading is taken—talking and moving affect accuracy
- Ideally do not have a full bladder as you will be less relaxed, not have exercised or had caffeine, nicotine or a large meal recently as these can also temporarily increase your blood pressure
- Wear loose clothing on your upper arm, it doesn't matter which arm you use but try to use the same one each time

## The equipment:

- Should be clean, in good working order and recalibrated or replaced every two years
- Make sure the upper arm cuff fits well
- The 'bladder' inside the cuff should encircle 80% of the top of the arm
- If the cuff does not fit, it is too big or small, the reading will be falsely high

## Technique:

- The cuff should be placed two to three centimetres above the elbow joint. Place it directly next to the skin
- The centre of the 'bladder' in the cuff should be positioned over the line of the artery—most cuffs have this marked on them already
- The arm should be supported at heart level, you may need a cushion to lift it high enough
- Take the reading by turning the monitor on and pressing start. After a few minutes take a second reading as the first is often high
- Write down the numbers exactly as they appear on the screen
- Use the diagram below to assist with the next steps

Follow the home monitoring flow chart to see what action needs to be taken.

Everyone should follow healthy lifestyle advice.

### READING IS TAKEN

#### <115/75 mmHg BLOOD PRESSURE ACCEPTABLE

Re-check in 5 years or sooner and follow lifestyle advice where provided

#### 115/75 - 134/84 mmHg HIGH SIDE OF NORMAL

Re-check in a year and follow lifestyle advice where provided

#### 135/85 - 164/104 mmHg HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE

Re-check in 5 minutes and if still high: Follow-up measurement e.g. by local pharmacy, practice nursing team or self-testing – if still within this range see your GP within 3 months of first reading

DO NOT IGNORE.

#### Over 165/105 mmHg VERY HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE

Re-check in 5 minutes and if still high: IF SHOWING SYMPTOMS (blurred vision or headaches) see your GP within 48 hours, IF NO SYMPTOMS have follow-up measurement e.g. by local pharmacy, practice nursing team or GP ASAP. DO NOT IGNORE.