

Measuring Your Blood Pressure at Home

What is home blood pressure monitoring?

Home blood pressure monitoring is when you measure your own blood pressure at home using a blood pressure monitor.

What are the benefits of monitoring my blood pressure at home?

Measuring your blood pressure at home can help to give you and your clinician a more accurate picture of your blood pressure over time. Everyone's blood pressure naturally rises and falls over the course of a day and some people can be anxious when having their blood pressure taken in surgery, making their blood pressure higher than normal (known as 'white coat effect'). This means that a 'one-off' reading taken at the surgery or in hospital may not accurately reflect your real blood pressure. Home blood pressure readings can avoid these problems and can help to:

- Establish whether you have high blood pressure (also known as hypertension)
- Identify whether your blood pressure is higher when taken at the GP surgery or hospital than at home (white coat effect)
- Decide if blood pressure medication is required
- Decide whether any changes to current blood pressure medication are required

Taking Your Blood Pressure At Home

- Ensure your blood pressure monitor is less than 5 years old.
- It is important that you always measure your blood pressure on the same arm.
- Do not wear any tight or restrictive clothing around the arm you are measuring your blood pressure in. For example, you should avoid rolling up tight shirt sleeves.
- You should rest for at least five minutes before measuring your blood pressure. During this time you should sit in a quiet place, try to relax and avoid speaking to anyone.
- Place the cuff on your arm with the wire pointing downwards. The bottom of the cuff should be approximately 2cm above the bend in your elbow.
- Make sure that you are sitting down when taking your blood pressure readings and that you have both of your feet flat on the floor with your legs uncrossed. The arm that you are measuring your blood pressure in should be supported on a firm surface (such as a table or desk) with your palm facing up and should be at the same level as your heart.

