

Home Blood Pressure Monitoring

Monitoring blood pressure at home can help people with high blood pressure to keep their condition under control. This can be especially helpful for people who are starting to take medications to lower blood pressure, as it can help to determine how well the medications are working. Home monitoring can also be good for people that have “white coat hypertension” or people that have high blood pressure readings only during their medical appointments, but have normal blood pressure the rest of the day. Home blood pressure monitoring can also help to identify people that have “masked hypertension” or those that have normal blood pressure readings at medical appointments, but have high blood pressure the rest of the day.

Types of Blood Pressure Monitors:

There are two main types of home blood pressure monitors: arm monitors and wrist monitors.



Arm Monitors

Pros: Fully automatic. Typically are more accurate than wrist monitors in calibration testing. Some models have more features which allow monitoring more than one person's blood

pressure. Many can also be connected to a computer or smart phone to keep track of your records.

Cons: Accurate testing is completely dependent on the correct fit of the cuff—if it is too loose or too tight, the measurement will not be accurate. Often these units are bulky and not as portable as wrist monitors.

Wrist Monitors



Pros: Fully automatic. Usually, these are lightweight and very portable. Many people find these more comfortable than arm monitors. May be only option for people with large arm circumferences.

Cons: May be less accurate than arm models. Measurements need to be taken at heart level for an accurate reading which may be difficult to get right with a wrist cuff.



Steps to Getting the Best Blood Pressure Monitor:

1. Check lists and reviews for top scoring, accurate cuffs/monitors. Look for these lists from reputable sources such as American Heart Association or Consumer Reports.
2. Consider the cost. Most models cost between \$40-90. Some insurance companies may reimburse you for purchasing one.
3. Select what features you need. Some models are capable of syncing to your phone—if this is not important to you, perhaps skip the model that has this feature. Some models have ability to detect irregular heart rhythms. Consider what features are worth paying for.
4. Check the fit and accuracy. Make sure that the monitor that you choose fits your upper arm or wrist if using a wrist-based model. It is recommended to measure your arm with a tape measure to be sure the monitor is the correct size. Many cuffs come with more than one cuff as an option.

Blood Pressure Monitor Recommendations:

The American Medical Association established criteria to determine how and which automatic blood pressure monitors could be validated for clinical accuracy. The list is updated and maintained at www.validatebp.org.

Currently, the following models are validated for home blood pressure monitoring:

- Omron 3 Series
- Omron 5 Series
- Omron 7 Series
- Omron 10 Series
- Omron Upper Arm (Bronze, Silver, Gold, Platinum) Models
- A&D Medical Talking+ Blood Pressure Monitor
- A&D Medical ULTRACONNECT Wireless Blood Pressure Monitor
- Hillrom-Welch Allyn Welch Allyn Home Blood Pressure Monitor, 1700 Series
- Withings BPM Connect

Steps to using your Blood Pressure Monitor Properly:



You can also search on YouTube for “How to Use Your Home Blood Pressure Monitor” for a video to describe this process.



1. Do not smoke, drink any caffeine or alcohol, or exercise for at least 30 minutes prior to taking your blood pressure. Wait at least 30 minutes after a meal.
2. Use the bathroom and then sit quietly for 5 minutes before taking a reading. Do not talk during this resting time or while you are taking a reading.
3. Wrap the cuff around your bare arm, without any clothes between the cuff and your skin. Do not roll up your shirt sleeves as this could constrict your arm.
4. Sit on a sturdy chair with a supportive back with your feet flat on the floor. Rest your arms on a flat surface. The cuff of the monitor should be at the same level as your heart.

5. Take the reading at the same time every day. It is recommended that when you do take your reading, that you take two or three readings, about 1 minute apart to get an average. Many doctors recommend that you take your blood pressure right away in the morning **before** you take your medication and again between noon-4pm. This will give a better picture of what your blood pressure is doing throughout the day.

6. Record your measurements when finished.

Blood Pressure Classification

Blood Pressure Classification	Systolic Blood Pressure (Top Number)		Diastolic Blood Pressure (Bottom Number)	What to Do
Normal BP	<120mmHg	And	<80mHg	You are doing well! No need to change anything right now!
Elevated BP	120-129mmHg	And	<80mmHg	Keep checking your blood pressure daily or as often as your doctor suggests.
Stage 1 Hypertension	130-139mmHg	Or	80-89mmHg	If you see these numbers often, let your doctor know.
Stage 2 Hypertension	≥140mmHg	Or	≥90mmHg	If you see these numbers often, let your doctor know.
Hypertensive Crisis	>180mmHg	And	>120mmHg	Immediately call and let your doctor know if you see these numbers.
Hypertensive Emergency	>180mmHg	And/or	>120mmHg	Immediately call and let your doctor know if you see these numbers. If you have any shortness of breath, back pain, numbness/weakness, blurred vision, difficulty speaking or headache, call 911 .

*These categories are based on the 2017 American Heart Association Blood Pressure Guidelines.