

Your Health: How to Take Blood Pressure at Home

Learning how to take blood pressure helps you take care of your own health or the health of someone you care for.

Choosing a home blood pressure monitor

An automatic blood pressure monitor is recommended. These monitors are easy to use. They do the measuring for you.

If you can, try to choose a monitor that saves the blood pressure readings. You may want to choose one that can print your results or send them directly to your doctor.

Try to choose a monitor that has been validated to give accurate readings. Contact your doctor if you want help choosing a monitor. You can check your monitor's accuracy by taking it to your doctor's office.

To get a monitor that is the right fit for you, you may need to measure your arm to make sure you have the right size.

Taking your blood pressure

If your doctor recommends it, take your blood pressure twice a day, in the morning and evening.

Preparing to take your blood pressure

- Don't drink caffeine, smoke, or exercise for at least 30 minutes before you take your blood pressure.
- Empty your bladder before the test.
- Sit with your back straight, such as on a dining chair, with both feet on the floor.
- Rest quietly for at least 5 minutes before you take a reading.



- Do not move, talk, or text while you take your blood pressure.

Placing the cuff

1. Sit with your arm slightly bent and resting comfortably on a table so that your upper arm is on the same level as your heart. Use the same arm each time you take your blood pressure.
2. Wrap the blood pressure cuff around your bare upper arm. The lower edge of the cuff should be about 1 inch (2.5 cm) above the bend of your elbow.

Using your monitor

Follow the instructions that came with your blood pressure monitor. They might be different from the instructions below.

1. After the cuff has been placed on your arm, press the on/off button.
2. You may need to wait until the screen says the monitor is ready.
3. Press the start button. The cuff will inflate. It will feel tight on your arm.
4. After a few seconds, the cuff will begin to deflate. The numbers on the screen will begin to drop.
5. The monitor shows your blood pressure.
6. Wait one minute and take your blood pressure again.
7. If your monitor does not automatically save your blood pressure numbers, write them down along with the date and time.

Keeping a blood pressure log

Your doctor may ask you to keep a blood pressure log. You can use the sample to make your own log in a notebook or to make a spreadsheet on your computer.

| Date | Time (a.m.) | Blood pressure | Time (p.m.) | Blood pressure | Comments |
|-------------|-------------|----------------|-------------|----------------|-----------------------|
| Sample: 8/6 | 8:15 | 138/87 | 6:20 | 142/92 | Stressful day at work |
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