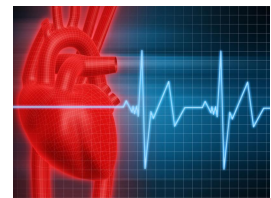


What do I Need to do Before I Measure My Blood Pressure?^{1,2}

Your blood pressure changes throughout the day and many things can affect your blood pressure.

- **Home Blood Pressure Monitor** - There are many types of machines on the market for testing blood pressure at home. Your pharmacist can help you decide which monitor is best for you.
- Before using your monitor for the first time, **have your doctor or nurse check its accuracy against the office model**. If you drop or damage the device, take it in for a check to ensure it is still working properly. Also have your monitor **checked yearly to ensure accuracy**.
- You should **measure your blood pressure at least twice daily**, once in the morning before taking any medications, and once in the evening.
- Your blood pressure is **highest first thing in the morning**, so you may want to wait an hour or so after waking. If you exercise after waking, take your blood pressure before exercising.
- **Avoid food, caffeine, alcohol, or tobacco products for 30 minutes before measuring your blood pressure** because they may increase your blood pressure.
- **Go to the bathroom** before measuring your blood pressure because a full bladder may increase blood pressure slightly.
- **Rest for 3 to 5 minutes** before measuring your blood pressure. Sit in a comfortable position, with your legs and ankles uncrossed and your back supported.
- **Place your arm on a table or desk, raised to the level of your heart**, and sit still.
- Wrap the **correctly sized cuff** smoothly and snugly around the **upper part of your bare arm**. If your sleeve is rolled up and fits tightly around your arm, you may need to slip your arm out of the sleeve to prevent an inaccurate reading. The **cuff should fit snugly**, but there should be **enough room for you to slip one fingertip under the cuff**.
- Be certain that the bottom edge of the **cuff is 1 inch above the crease of your elbow**.
- **Do not talk** while taking your blood pressure. Take another reading two to three minutes after the first one to check for accuracy.
- If your monitor does not automatically record blood pressure readings or heart rates, write them down.
- Take measurements with you to your next doctor's appointment.



¹ FamilyDoctor.org. American Academy of Family Physicians. Blood Pressure Monitoring at Home. Available at: <http://familydoctor.org/online/famdocen/home/common/heartdisease/treatment/128.html>. Accessed on 24-Feb-2009.

² Mayo Clinic Staff. High Blood Pressure: Get the Most Out of Home Blood Pressure Monitoring. Available at: <http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/high-blood-pressure/HI00016>. Accessed on 24-Feb-2009.