

# AHA's Recommendations for Taking a Blood Pressure Accurately

## 7 Simple Tips

to get an accurate blood pressure reading

► These common positioning errors can result in inaccurate blood pressure measurement. Picture shown is an estimate of how improper positioning can potentially impact blood pressure readings

- 1 Don't Have a Conversation**  
Talking or active listening adds 10 mmHg
- 2 Use Correct Cuff Size**  
Cuff too small adds 2-10 mmHg
- 3 Put Cuff on Bare Arm**  
Cuff over clothing adds 5-50 mmHg
- 4 Rest Arm at Heart Level**  
Unsupported arm adds 10 mmHg
- 5 Empty Bladder First**  
Full bladder adds 10mmHg
- 6 Keep Legs Uncrossed**  
Crossed legs adds 2-8 mmHg
- 7 Rest Back/Feet**  
Unsupported back and feet adds 6 mmHg

**i Remember:** collecting an **accurate reading** directly impacts the **health and life** of both **mother and baby**.



## Blood Pressure Categories During Pregnancy

| BLOOD PRESSURE CATEGORY                                                                              | SYSTOLIC mm Hg<br>(top/upper number) | and/or | DIASTOLIC mm Hg<br>(bottom/lower number) |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------|------------------------------------------|
| NON-HYPERTENSIVE                                                                                     | LESS THAN 140                        | and    | LESS THAN 90                             |
| HYPERTENSION IN PREGNANCY*                                                                           | 140 OR HIGHER                        | or     | 90 OR HIGHER                             |
| SEVERE HYPERTENSION*<br>(If you don't have symptoms, call your health care professional immediately) | 160 OR HIGHER                        | or     | 110 OR HIGHER                            |

► Alert a provider if a patient's blood pressure is in the **orange** or **red zone**.

\*If you have any of these symptoms, call 911; severe headache, change in vision, abdominal pain, chest pain, significant swelling, or shortness of breath

AHA = American Heart Association