

# Checking Your Blood Pressure at Home

## Why should I check my blood pressure at home?

Checking your blood pressure at home is more accurate than checking it at the doctor's office. If your blood pressure is high, treating it can lower the risk of problems with your heart, kidneys, and eyes.

## Where can I get a monitor to measure my blood pressure at home?

You can buy them at pharmacies, medical supply stores, and online. Some insurance companies will pay for it. Medicare does not. Call your insurance company to find out what your plan offers. Flexible spending accounts often can be used to buy a monitor.

Be sure to buy an accurate monitor. Here are two websites for finding accurate monitors:

<https://validatebp.org>

[http://www.dableducational.org/sphygmomanometers/devices\\_2\\_sbpm.html#ArmTable](http://www.dableducational.org/sphygmomanometers/devices_2_sbpm.html#ArmTable)

Your doctor or pharmacist can also help you choose a monitor with a cuff that fits correctly around your arm. They can also teach you how to use it.

## How do I check my blood pressure at home?

- Avoid exercise, caffeine, nicotine, and other stimulants 30 minutes before checking your blood pressure.
- Empty your bladder.



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This handout is provided to you by your family doctor and the American Academy of Family Physicians. Other health-related information is available from the AAFP online at <https://familydoctor.org>.

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## Checking Your Blood Pressure at Home *(continued)*

- Rest quietly and avoid talking or texting for at least five minutes before taking your blood pressure and during the measurement.
- Wrap the cuff snugly on your bare arm. The instructions will tell you how to line it up. If you are wearing a tight shirt, take your arm out of the sleeve. Your arm should rest on a flat surface with your upper arm at the level of your heart.
- Sit with your back supported, legs uncrossed, and feet flat on the ground as shown in the photo.

### How often should I check my blood pressure?

This depends on several things, such as your usual blood pressure and how well it is controlled. Your doctor will tell you how often to check.

### What should my blood pressure be?

This changes from person to person. Your doctor will tell you what your goals should be. Ask your doctor what to do if you get readings above or below your goals.

Blood pressure goal: \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

Contact your doctor if your blood pressure is above: \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

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