

# Monitoring Your Blood Pressure at Home



It's as easy as 1-2-3! Follow these easy steps to learn how.

## Step 1

Avoid stimulants such as caffeine, cigarettes, and inhalers 30 minutes before measuring your blood pressure.

Wait at least 30 minutes after a meal.

Empty your bladder before starting.

If you're on blood pressure medication, ask your provider what times to take your readings.

Sit alone in a quiet space without distraction. Turn off the TV and cell phone.

## Step 2

Sit with legs and ankles uncrossed and keep your feet flat on the floor.

Remove all clothing from the upper arm.

Place the cuff above the elbow, mid-way up.

The cuff should feel secure, but not tight or loose.

Keep the arm supported and relaxed, palm up.

Rest your arm so the cuff is at heart level.

## Step 3

Rest for five minutes while in position before starting.

Avoid conversations, TV, and phones until after your reading.

Take two or three measurements, at least one minute apart.

Ask your provider which arm is best for your measurement.

Record all measurements you take. Note the time of day and which arm was used. Bring your diary to each office visit.

**Check your blood pressure with a home machine instead of using a public device.**

### Why is it important?

Public machines are not regulated to read accurately, especially over time; and the cuffs are not sized to each individual.

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Under certain circumstances with select supply companies, home blood pressure machines are covered by some health plans, and are the best way to check your readings outside of the doctor's office. The techniques below show how to obtain the most accurate readings possible, including placement of the cuff. Consistency in technique is important to your blood pressure treatment plan.

## What do you need to do to obtain a home blood pressure screening device?

- Visit your doctor to get a prescription.
- During this visit, have your doctor fit your arm for the correct cuff size.
- Visit your health insurance plan's website or call their customer care department to find out if the cost of your at-home device is covered, and where you can go to get one.

## Tips for Home Blood Pressure Monitoring

- It's important to check your blood pressure at home because a single reading in the doctor's office reflects only a brief period of time during your daily routine. That may not be a good reflection of your usual blood pressure. Statistics show that as many as 20% of Americans have a different blood pressure reading at home than they do in the doctor's office.
- Bring your blood pressure monitor to your doctor's office to compare its reading to theirs. Let your doctor see how you are taking your blood pressure to make sure you are doing it properly. Remember, improper technique can cause false readings, and your treatment plan is largely based on these readings.
- Ask what times of the day you should be measuring your blood pressure, which may depend on several factors. Keep a diary of your blood pressure readings, noting the time of day taken. Bring your blood pressure diary to all of your doctor's appointments so your provider can make the best decision about your treatment, based on the most information.

**Be sure to speak to your doctor about any concerns you have about high blood pressure.**