

Blood Pressure Monitoring at Home

1. Best to check BP between 6 and 10 a.m. (It is also helpful to check the blood pressure in the evening for one week to rule out the possibility of a rise in blood pressure later in the day, an uncommon but possibly condition – once this is ruled out, it is not necessary to check again).
 - a. Sit in a comfortable chair with a back rest.
 - b. Keep legs uncrossed and feet resting on the floor.
 - c. Arm with the BP cuff on should be rested on a counter that is at the same level as your heart.

2. Relax for five minutes with the BP cuff on and then take your blood pressure three (3) times, one (1) minute apart.
 - a. Average the three readings by adding them up and dividing by three.
 - b. Record this average in your BP log.

3. Repeat this procedure daily for seven (7) days.
 - a. At the end of the 7 days, add up the 7 recorded averages determined as in #2 and divide the total by 7.
 - b. This will give you the average BP for the week and if this figure that can be used to determine how to proceed in the management of your blood pressure.
 - i. If your weekly average is 125 or greater, call the office for action on lowering your blood pressure to more healthy levels.
 - ii. If your weekly average is between 120 and 124, continue your current program and discuss if any action needs to be taken the next time you visit the office.
 - iii. If your weekly average if 119 or less, congratulations – you have reached the goal for your blood pressure that best promotes good health. You can put your BP cuff away for three (3) to six (6) months and then repeat this procedure again.
 - c. If your average BP reading was 125 or more and you called the office for directions as to how to alter your program to achieve better readings, proceed as following:
 - i. Follow the new program as directed for three (3) weeks. It is not necessary for you to check your blood pressure during this time unless you should become lightheaded.
 - ii. After three weeks, repeat this one week BP check as described in #1-3b above.

High Blood Pressure

Following are some points that have been established in more recent months regarding blood pressure and the effect it has on your health. Untreated high blood pressure is very likely the largest risk factor a person can have, hence making it of the highest importance to be adequately addressed so as to bring it under control. Do not ignore monitoring your and controlling your blood pressure.

- Numerous studies have now established the importance of monitoring your blood pressure in the home sitting—if you do not own a Blood Pressure cuff, it is most probably the best investment of medical dollars you can spend.
- There is another handout available from our office, for the asking, describing how to use a blood pressure cuff and monitor your blood pressure at home.
- Another study has demonstrated that altering medications through the home sitting is also more effective for achieving good control of blood pressure than doing so through the office.
- Each 10 mmHg reduction in systolic blood pressure (the top figure) is associated with a 20% reduction in major cardiovascular disease events; a 17% reduction in coronary heart disease; a 27% reduction in stroke; a 28% reduction in heart failure; a 13% reduction in all-cause mortality. NOTE: This is a big deal!!
- There is no evidence of harm in reducing the blood pressure below 130 mmHg systolic (top figure).
- The five classes of medications available for reduction of blood pressure are generally all equal in their effectiveness in reducing the risk of major outcomes. Your provider can select the one that is most effective for you.
- Generally speaking, using two blood pressure lowering medications, from different classes, at lower doses, is far superior to using higher doses of a single agent.
- Good health habits should not be overlooked in treating high blood pressure
 - Sleep apnea must be ruled out if there is any question that it might exist. Sleep apnea definitely raises blood pressure (besides doing a whole host of other negative things).
 - The Anti-Inflammatory Diet (DASH, Mediterranean, Weight Watches all good too) is very helpful for lowering blood pressure, usually 5-8 mmHg.
 - Exercise does not lower high blood pressure but it helps to maintain a blood pressure that has been lowered to normal (30 minutes of exercise at 2.5-3.0 MPH walking, 5-7 days a week—NOTE: the frequency of exercising is much more important than the duration!)
- There is no evidence to support a “J-curve” for lowering blood pressure.
 - A J-curve is the phenomena where there is a “sweet spot” where best results are obtained, and going below or above that spot leads to increasing risk
 - This means that lowering blood pressure leads to decreasing risk, unless lightheadedness or similar side effects occur.
 - It also means that lowering blood pressure to lower figures (less than 130 mmHg systolic) should be helpful even in high-risk patients.
- Further questions? Bring them to your provider so together, we can bring this “killer disease” under control