



Check Your Blood Pressure At Home

Congratulations!

Congratulations on taking the steps to check your blood pressure at home. When you and your doctor work together to reach your blood pressure goals, you are more likely to achieve them. That means you reduce the chance of stroke and heart attack. It is important to know that blood pressure readings are almost never exactly the same from one time to the next. But if you take your blood pressure enough times, you will get a good idea of your true blood pressure. Once you have taken your blood pressure enough times, you can get an average blood pressure. Use this number as a guide.

- Your physician will determine what your personal blood pressure goal is and exactly when you should check your blood pressure at home
- If you think you are experiencing a medical emergency, call 911 immediately or seek other emergency services

The goals for blood pressure control depend on where you are and if you have other medical conditions like diabetes, chronic kidney disease or had a bleeding stroke.

	BP goal at home	BP goal in office
Without diabetes, chronic kidney disease or bleeding stroke	Less than 135/85	Less than 140/90
With diabetes, chronic kidney disease or bleeding stroke	Less than 125/75	Less than 130/80

How often and when should you take your blood pressure?

Morning

Check your blood pressure two or three times between 6 am and 10 am for three days in a row. Take the readings before you eat breakfast and before you take your medicine. Write down the results in your logbook.

Evening

Check your blood pressure two or three times between 6 pm and 10 pm for three days in a row. It does not matter what time you eat or take medicine. Write down the results in your logbook.

Get ready to take your blood pressure

Be sure you have a blood pressure cuff that fits you. The part of the cuff that inflates should be at least as long as the widest place around your upper arm.

- Do not use tobacco products, drink coffee, or exercise for at least 30 minutes before taking your blood pressure.
- Use the bathroom if needed. If you have a full bladder, your blood pressure reading may be higher than usual.
- Do not take your blood pressure if you are nervous or upset.
- Rest at least 5 minutes before taking your first reading. Wait one minute between taking your other readings.

How to sit

- Sit in a chair that supports your back. Rest your arm on a table so that your upper arm is on the same level as your heart.
- Sit with your arm slightly bent with palm up. Keep your feet flat on the floor and your legs uncrossed.

How to put on the blood pressure cuff

- Use the same arm every time you take a reading.
- Make sure that you can put the blood pressure cuff directly on the skin of your upper arm. You may need to remove any sweaters or pull up your sleeves.
- Wrap the blood pressure cuff snugly around your upper arm, palm facing up. The lower edge of the cuff should be about 1 inch (2.5 cm) above the bend of your elbow.



How to use electronic blood pressure monitors

- Press the on/off button on the electronic monitor. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for using the device.
- The blood pressure cuff will automatically inflate to about 180mmHg (unless the monitor decides you need a higher number). Then the cuff will begin to deflate automatically and the numbers on the screen will begin to drop.

Wait at least one minute before taking another blood pressure reading.

Tips for getting correct readings on your blood pressure monitor

- When you purchase a blood pressure monitor, bring it to the doctor's office to compare the reading you get with the reading that is taken in the office. They should be close. Repeat this check yearly to make sure your machine is working properly.
- Look often at the blood pressure cuff and rubber tubing. Make sure they are in good condition and do not have any holes or cracks.

How can you learn more about high blood pressure?

- *Log on:* members.kp.org. Search for **high blood pressure** in the **Health encyclopedia**.
- *Look in:* Kaiser Permanente Healthwise Handbook.