

## PARTICIPANT INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE USE OF BLOOD PRESSURE MONITOR

### Introduction

Welcome – you have been loaned a blood pressure monitor as part of the NHS Direct Healthlines Service. This information sheet provides a simple step-by-step process for using the monitor, and explains more about monitoring your blood pressure. However, should you prefer, there is a Manufacturer's Instruction Manual in the pack. Please take note of the 'Important Safety Information' on pages 1 and 2 of the Manufacturer's Manual, and the 'Maintenance Instructions' on page 16.

### Getting started

#### Preparation:

1. Put the monitor on the table where you can reach it easily
2. Sit quietly and relaxed, with both feet flat on the floor, and make sure your back is straight in the chair

#### Putting on the cuff:

1. The Healthlines researcher informed you which arm – your right or left – you need to take your blood pressure with. **It is very important that you always use this arm.** Please ring Frederika Collihole from the Healthlines team on (0117) 331 4532 if you forget which arm you have been told to take your blood pressure with.
2. The tubing from the cuff should be pushed firmly into the connection on the left hand side of the blood pressure monitor
3. Before you start, look at the diagram on the cuff and note that the cuff should be at about the same level as your heart
4. Slip your arm through the cuff and lay your arm outstretched on the table, palm upwards
5. **Position of the cuff:**
  - a. The arrow at the bottom of the cuff (under the tube) should be centred on the inside fold of your elbow. The tubing should be pointing towards your hand, not your shoulder
  - b. Leave a 2 cm gap between the inside fold of your elbow and the bottom of the cuff (this is approximately 2 finger-widths)
  - c. The cuff should be fairly tight around your arm, but not uncomfortable, and the Velcro fastener should be pushed down firmly



#### Note:

- Cuff in line with the heart (see **red arrow**)
- Sitting upright in the chair
- Palm facing upwards on the table
- Relaxed
- Monitor within easy reach

## What can affect your blood pressure readings

Your blood pressure fluctuates over the course of each 24 hours, and a number of factors can make a difference to your readings, so, to be consistent, here are a few helpful dos and don'ts to follow when taking your blood pressure.



### DOs


- \* Take your blood pressure whilst in a seated position with your legs uncrossed, your back and arm supported, and after sitting quietly for a few minutes
- \* Make sure that the arrow mark on the cuff is in the middle of the inside of your elbow
- \* Breathe normally and relax while you are taking the reading
- \* Use the same arm each time
- \* Wait at least an hour after drinking alcohol, smoking or drinking tea or coffee, as these can increase your blood pressure
- \* Wait at least an hour after taking exercise
- \* Take it at about the same time each day (use an alarm or mark on your diary or calendar)

### DON'Ts



- \* Don't talk or move while the monitor is on
- \* Don't take it over a shirt sleeve. If you roll up your sleeve, make sure it isn't tight on your upper arm, as this can restrict the blood flow and give a false reading
- \* Don't take it immediately after a bath

## Taking your blood pressure (always take 2 readings)

1. Put the cuff on your arm as described in the 'Getting started' instructions on page 1
2. Press the big blue button that looks like this 0/1 on the right-hand side of the monitor and the cuff will inflate **START**
3. The symbol in the bottom right-hand corner of the monitor screen should show OK, like this: 
4. The cuff will deflate on its own - remove the cuff and record the measurements in your Blood Pressure Recording Booklet
5. Wait for 2 minutes and take your blood pressure again, following the above steps 1 through 3
6. Write down the second reading in your Blood Pressure Recording Booklet
7. Now, enter the second reading on the NHS Direct Healthlines website (see the next page for instructions on how to do this)

## How to record your blood pressure and what you are recording

Your blood pressure monitor records the pressure of your blood on the walls of your arteries.

*Systolic*: is the blood pressure when the heart is contracting

*Diastolic*: is the blood pressure when the heart is relaxing between heartbeats

It is essential that both these measurements are recorded. The monitor also records your heartbeats per minute.

### Taking a blood pressure recording:

1. Write down the date and time of day
2. Make a note of the results **exactly as they are on the screen** on the front of the monitor, into your Blood Pressure Recording Booklet
  - a. The top number **SYS** (= Systolic)
  - b. The middle number **DIA** (= Diastolic)
  - c. The bottom number **PULSE** (number of beats per minute)
3. Turn off the blood pressure monitor
4. Disconnect the tube and replace the monitor and the cuff back in its zipped case

## My blood pressure today

Enter the blood pressure readings carried out at the GP surgery today below:

Date & Time		1st reading	2nd reading	Entered on website (✓)
	Systolic			
	Diastolic			

## How to enter your blood pressure readings on the Healthlines website

- Please go on the NHS Direct Healthlines website to enter the results as soon as you have taken your blood pressure (<https://services.nhsdirect.nhs.uk/healthlines>)
- Log into the website by entering your username and password in the '**Log On**' box on the right-hand side of the screen
- Click on '**My Heart Health**'
- Then, click on the green '**Enter New Blood Pressure Reading**' tab (click on these words, and the tab will open). The screen will look like this:



## My Heart Health

[Information](#)

[Taking Your Blood Pressure](#)

[Enter New Blood Pressure Reading](#)

[Blood Pressure History](#)

[Blood Pressure Targets](#)



Use this page to enter your Blood Pressure reading and the date and time that you take it. Remember that you will need to take two readings, but you only need to enter the second reading.

To enter the date, click in box 1 to display the calendar, then select the date that you took the reading.

1. Date reading taken:

To enter the time, click in box 2 to display a list of times, then select the time that you took the reading.

2. Time reading taken:

Enter your Blood Pressure reading in boxes 3 and 4 – only enter your second reading.

3. Systolic – enter the top number on your monitor (SYS):

4. Diastolic – enter the middle number on your monitor (DIA):

Please note: the bottom number on your monitor shows your pulse. You do not need to enter this information here.

5. Click the Save button to record your reading:

- Enter the **date** by clicking in the blank area of the 'Date reading taken' box. A calendar will automatically appear – click on the date you actually took the reading.
- Enter the **time** you actually took the reading by clicking on the down arrow: Times are displayed in **24-hour format** (e.g. for 5pm, select 17:00)
- Enter the blood pressure results for the **second reading only**. Enter **systolic first, then diastolic**
- Click the green 'Save' button at the bottom of the screen. If your blood pressure is above target, the next screen will look like this:



## My Heart Health

[Information](#)

[Taking Your Blood Pressure](#)

[Enter New Blood Pressure Reading](#)

[Blood Pressure History](#)

[Blood Pressure Targets](#)

### Next reading due

The next reading is due on: 03/12/2012

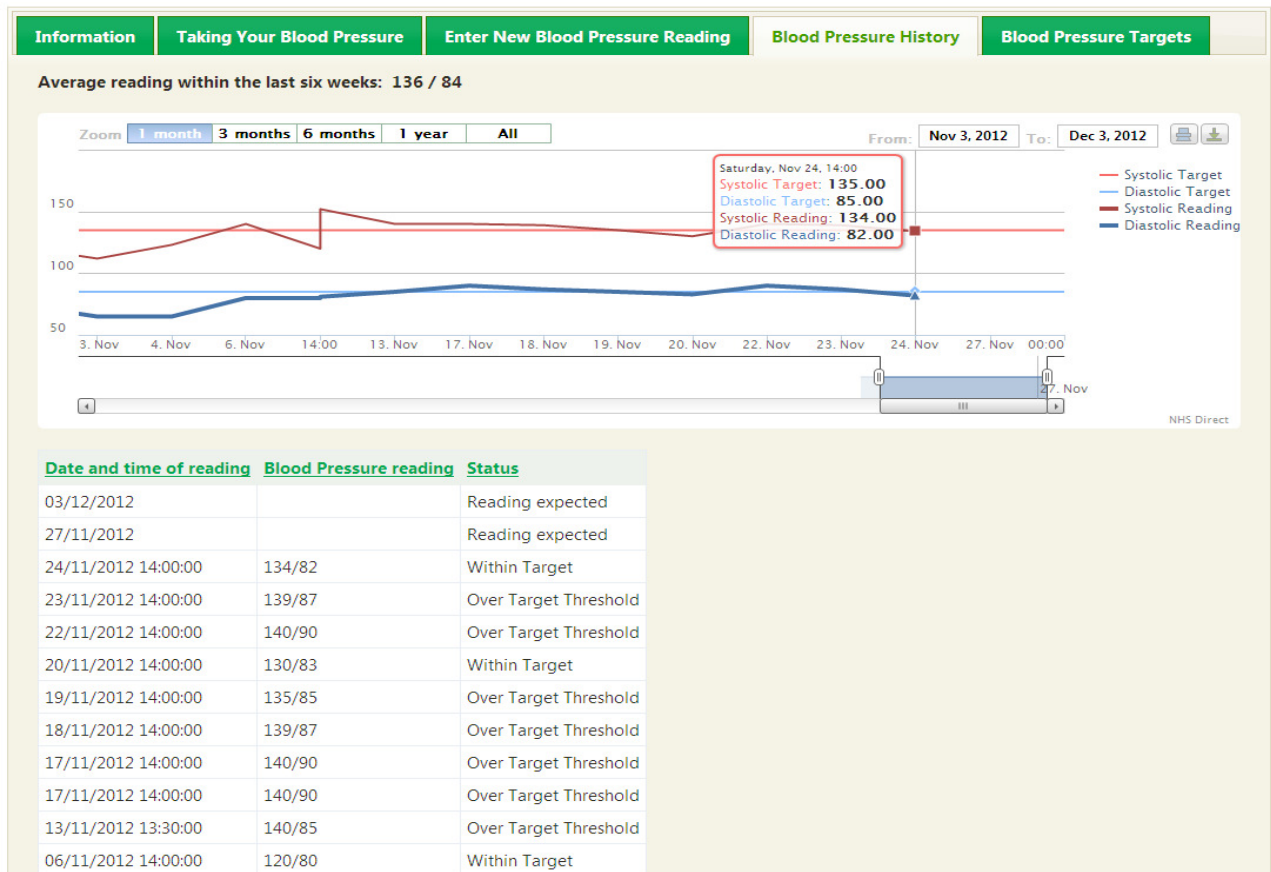
### Your Blood Pressure Targets

135 / 85

### The Blood Pressure reading just entered

140 / 90  
Above Target

- If you see the screen above, your results have been saved. If you do not want to view anything else on the website, you can log out of the website by clicking on the words '**Log Off**' near the top right corner of the screen.
- To view a simple line graph of the blood pressure readings that you have entered over time, click on the green '**Blood Pressure History**' tab (right next to the 'Enter New Blood Pressure Reading' tab). Below is an example of what the screen might look like, but your line graph will probably look a bit different:



- This example shows blood pressure readings over a period of 1 month. By clicking on the options next to 'Zoom' above the graph (on the left side), you can change the view to 3 months, 6 months, 1 year, or view all readings in a single graph (click on 'All' for this view).
- In the graph, the top **dark red line** that is wavy shows the **systolic readings** entered in the last 1 month. The completely straight **lighter red line** below this shows the **target systolic reading** in this example.
- The **dark blue wavy line** shows the **diastolic readings** entered. Finally, the completely straight **lighter blue line** below this is the **target diastolic reading** in this example.
- If you hover your cursor anywhere over one of the coloured lines, a box like that shown above will display your blood pressure targets and the readings you entered for that day.
- To view your own personal blood pressure targets, click on the green '**Blood Pressure Targets**' tab (right next to the 'Blood Pressure History' tab). Ideally, your systolic and diastolic blood pressure readings should be below these target levels (see the next section, 'What should my blood pressure be?').

## How often should I take my blood pressure?

Each time you take your blood pressure, you need to **take 2 readings, 2 minutes apart**. Record these readings in your Blood Pressure Recording Booklet, and then enter the second reading each time on the Healthlines website.

**(a) When you first join the NHS Direct Healthlines Service, for the first week:**

Record your blood pressure twice a day – ideally, once in the morning and once in the evening – for 7 days. Try to make these about the same times each day. Remember that you need to take 2 readings, 2 minutes apart each time. This means you will take 4 blood pressure readings a day in total.

Your Healthlines Advisor will review the readings you enter on the Healthlines website with you when they phone you. If your average blood pressure is above your target, they will consider referring you to your GP (doctor) to discuss increasing your treatment. If your average blood pressure is below your target, they will ask you to move on to taking your blood pressure each week.

**(b) After the first week:**

Unless your Healthlines Advisor has told you otherwise, please record your blood pressure once a week. On whichever day of the week this is, you will still need to take 2 blood pressure readings, 2 minutes apart. Enter the second reading on the Healthlines website.

Your Healthlines Advisor will review your recent blood pressure readings with you each month, when they call you.

## What should my blood pressure be?

In the levels described below, less than 135/85 means: - a SYSTOLIC of less than 135 and  
- a DIASTOLIC of less than 85

Generally, people who are on drug treatment for high blood pressure, or who have other risk factors for heart attacks or strokes, should ideally have a blood pressure below the following target levels:

- Less than **135/85** for people aged under 80 years (without diabetes)
- Less than **125/75** for people with type 1 diabetes
- Less than **135/75** for people with type 2 diabetes
- Less than **125/75** for people with chronic kidney disease AND diabetes

If your blood pressure is slightly above these target levels, do not worry. Your doctor may decide to increase your tablets. But some people find that they cannot reach these blood pressure levels unless they take so many tablets that they get side effects. Your doctor may agree that slightly higher targets are reasonable for you. If you are concerned, discuss this with your doctor.

Also, blood pressure varies quite a lot from time to time and from day to day. That is why the website calculates an average from your recent readings. Don't worry about one reading – the average is what matters, which is why we'd like you to take quite a lot of readings.

Do write down accurately the second reading that you take each time. Don't just write down the 'best' or lowest readings! If you do that, we will get a misleading idea about your true blood pressure level and you won't get the right treatment.

### What if my blood pressure is much too high, or too low?

You may occasionally get a high or low reading. An occasional high reading might occur if you are stressed or anxious, and might settle down if you wait for a few minutes, relax, and take it again. Don't worry if you get one high or low reading and your other readings are usually OK. But if you get consistently high or low readings, you should consult your doctor. The website will prompt you to do so, as described below:

#### Too high:

- If your systolic blood pressure is 180 mmHg or higher, or your diastolic pressure is 110 mmHg or higher, the website will give you advice as follows:  
*"Please repeat your blood pressure now on two more occasions, half an hour apart (this is in addition to your usual readings). If the readings remain at or above 180 (systolic) or 110 (diastolic) please contact your GP. If you have symptoms of headache, nosebleeds, visual symptoms, palpitations, or feel unwell, please contact your GP or NHS Direct immediately for advice and assessment. If you have none of these symptoms please contact your GP the same day for advice."*

#### Too low:

- If your systolic blood pressure is less than 101 mmHg, the website will advise you as follows:  
*"Please repeat your blood pressure now on two more occasions half an hour apart (this is in addition to your usual readings). If the readings remain at 100 or below (systolic) please contact your GP. If you have symptoms of chest pain, feeling faint or short of breath, or feel unwell please contact your GP or NHS Direct immediately for advice and assessment. If you have none of these symptoms please contact your GP the same day for advice."*

### Troubleshooting and maintenance



See the Manufacturer's Instruction Manual on pages 12-17 if you experience problems.

However, here are a few symbols that may occur:



- If this **OK symbol** does not show when you turn the monitor on, then the cuff is not properly fitted. Turn off the machine, adjust the cuff, and start again at **step 1** in the 'Getting started' instructions in this document.

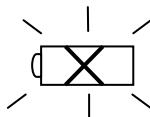


- b.  This symbol means you have moved whilst the measurements are taking place. Turn off the machine, wait for a few minutes and start again at **step 1** in the 'Getting started' instructions in this document.
- c.  This symbol means you have a weak or irregular pulse. Turn off the machine, and start again at **step 1** in the 'Getting started' instructions in this document. ***If you get a repeat of this, you should contact your doctor or NHS Direct (Tel: 0845 46 47).***

## How to set up the monitor after the batteries have been removed

### Battery replacement: (You are responsible for the purchase of new batteries)

- a. When the low battery symbol appears on the display unit, replace the batteries
- b. The monitor is powered by 4 AA alkaline batteries



**When this symbol is BLINKING, the batteries are low – change all of the batteries**

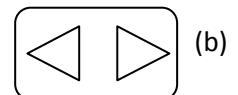
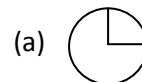


**When this symbol appears, the batteries have expired – change all of the batteries**

- c. The battery compartment is on the base of the monitor
- d. Insert the batteries following the diagram inside the battery compartment

### Setting the buzzer/ date / time

**(This is optional and will not affect the readings)**



- a. **Buzzer:** Press button (a), press triangles in (b) to switch buzzer on/off  
(We recommend this is ON, so that the buzzer will sound when the blood pressure reading is complete) ***Press button (a) to continue***
- b. **Year:** Press triangles in (b) to set the correct year ***Press button (a) to continue***
- c. **Month:** Press triangles in (b) to set the correct month ***Press button (a) to continue***
- d. **Day:** Press triangles in (b) to set the correct day ***Press button (a) to continue***
- e. **Hour:** Press triangles in (b) to set the correct hour  
24 hr clock ***Press button (a) to continue***
- f. **Minutes:** Press triangles in (b) to set the correct minutes ***Press button (a) to continue***

**\*\*\* Press the big blue 0/1 button on the monitor to store the settings \*\*\***  
**START**