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Blood pressure monitors for home

Your health care provider may ask you to keep track of your blood pressure at home. To do this, you will need to get home blood pressure monitor. The monitor you choose should be good quality and fit well.

MANUAL BLOOD PRESSURE MONITORS

- Manual devices include a cuff that wraps around your arm, a rubber squeeze bulb, and a gauge that measures the blood pressure. A stethoscope is needed to listen to the blood pulsing through the artery.
- You can see your blood pressure on the circular dial of the gauge as the needle moves around and the pressure in the cuff rises or falls.
- When used correctly, manual devices are very accurate. However, they are not the recommended type of blood pressure monitor for home use.

DIGITAL BLOOD PRESSURE MONITORS

- A digital device will also have a cuff that wraps around your arm. To inflate the cuff, you may need to use a rubber squeeze ball. Other kinds will inflate automatically when you push a button.
- After the cuff is inflated, the pressure will slowly drop on its own. The screen will show a digital readout of your systolic and diastolic blood pressure.
- After showing your blood pressure, the cuff will deflate on its own. With many machines, you must wait for 15 to 30 seconds before using it again.
- A digital blood pressure monitor will not be as accurate if your body is moving when you are using it. Also, an irregular heart rate will make the reading less accurate. However, digital monitors are the best choice for home use for most people.

TIPS FOR MONITORING YOUR BLOOD PRESSURE

- Practice using the monitor with your provider or nurse to make sure you are taking your blood pressure correctly.
- Your arm should be supported, with your upper arm at heart level and feet on the floor (back supported, legs uncrossed).
- It's best to measure your blood pressure after you rest for at least 5 minutes.
- Do not take your blood pressure when you are under stress, have had caffeine or used a tobacco product in the last 30 minutes, or have recently exercised.
- Take at least 2 readings 1 minute apart in the morning before taking medicines and in evening before eating supper. Try to measure and record BP daily for 5 days and then report your results to your provider.

Alternative Names

Hypertension - home monitoring

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