



American  
Heart  
Association.

# HOME BLOOD PRESSURE MEASUREMENT INSTRUCTIONS

## Before You Measure

- No smoking, caffeinated beverages, alcohol or exercise 30 minutes prior.
- Use a validated device with the correct cuff size. (Visit [Validate BP](#) to find a device you can trust.)
- Empty your bladder.
- Sit quietly for more than 5 minutes and do not talk.



## Proper Positioning

- Sit upright with back supported, feet on floor and legs uncrossed.
- Rest your arm comfortably on a flat surface at heart level.
- Wrap the cuff on your bare skin above the bend of the elbow, not over clothing.

## During Measurement

- Stay relaxed and do not talk.
- Take at least two readings, 1 minute apart.
- Record all results once measurement is completed and share them with your health care professional to help confirm your office blood pressure category.



## American Heart Association recommended office blood pressure categories

BLOOD PRESSURE CATEGORY	SYSTOLIC mm Hg (top/upper number)		DIASTOLIC mm Hg (bottom/lower number)
NORMAL	LESS THAN 120	and	LESS THAN 80
ELEVATED	120–129	and	LESS THAN 80
STAGE 1 HYPERTENSION (High Blood Pressure)	130–139	or	80–89
STAGE 2 HYPERTENSION (High Blood Pressure)	140 OR HIGHER	or	90 OR HIGHER
SEVERE HYPERTENSION (If you don't have symptoms*, call your health care professional.)	HIGHER THAN 180	and/or	HIGHER THAN 120
HYPERTENSIVE EMERGENCY (If you have any of these symptoms*, call 911.)	HIGHER THAN 180	and/or	HIGHER THAN 120

\*symptoms: chest pain, shortness of breath, back pain, numbness, weakness, change in vision or difficulty speaking

\* Wait a few minutes and take blood pressure again.

\* If your blood pressure is still high and there are no other signs or symptoms, contact your health care professional.

\* If you are experiencing signs of possible organ damage, such as chest pain, shortness of breath, back pain, numbness, weakness, change in vision or difficulty speaking, call 911.

Learn more at  
[heart.org/BP](http://heart.org/BP)