



American Heart Association®

Hard Hats with Heart™



Toolbox Talks

Choosing a Home Blood Pressure Monitor

AHA recommends an automatic cuff-style, bicep monitor

- Wrist and finger monitors are not recommended because they yield less reliable readings.
- Choose a monitor that has been validated. If you are unsure, ask your doctor or pharmacist for advice.
- When selecting a blood pressure monitor for a senior, pregnant woman or child, make sure it is validated for these conditions.
- Make sure the cuff fits – measure around your upper arm and choose a monitor that comes with the correct size cuff.

Bring your monitor to your next doctor's appointment

Have your physician check to see that you are using it correctly and getting the same results as the equipment in the office. Plan to bring your monitor in once a year to ensure the readings are accurate. Home blood pressure monitoring may be especially useful for:

- People who only have high readings at the doctor's office (aka "white coat" hypertension).
- People who only have high readings at home but not at the doctor's office ("masked" hypertension).
- Anyone diagnosed with high blood pressure (HBP or hypertension).
- Individuals starting high blood pressure treatment to determine its effectiveness.
- People requiring closer monitoring, especially individuals with risk factors for high blood pressure and/or conditions related to high blood pressure.
- Pregnant women, experiencing pregnancy-induced hypertension and/or preeclampsia

Left arm vs. Right arm blood pressure

Several studies have been done to determine what is a normal variation between right and left arm. In general, any difference of 10 mm Hg or less is considered normal and is not a cause for concern.

Frequently Asked Questions:

Why keep a blood pressure journal?

Having a record to bring to your doctor makes it easier for them to see trends with your numbers!

How do I know if a cuff has been validated?

You can check validatebp.org for a list of all validated BP devices

Discussion Questions:

- Is monitoring your blood pressure at home part of your routine?
- If not, what is stopping you?