Following these 7 simple tips may help you get an accurate blood pressure reading.

1. Don’t Have a Conversation
   Talking adds 10–15mmHg

2. Support Back
   Unsupported back adds 5–10mmHg

3. Put Cuff on Bare Arm
   Cuff over clothing adds 10–40mmHg

4. Support Arm at Heart Level
   Unsupported arm adds 10mmHg

5. Empty Bladder
   Full bladder adds 10–15mmHg

6. Keep Legs Uncrossed
   Crossing legs adds 5–10mmHg

7. Support Feet
   Unsupported feet add 5–10mmHg

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Patients can be prepared by:

- Not participating in vigorous physical activity within 30 minutes of blood pressure being taken
- Not drinking coffee, regular or diet caffeinated soda, alcohol, or smoking within 30 minutes of blood pressure being taken
- Emptying bladder and bowel right before BP is taken
- Sitting calmly for 5 minutes before BP is taken

Providers:

- Make sure the device is calibrated regularly according to manufacturers’ recommendations
- Wash hands
- Ensure you are using the proper cuff size for the patient
- If a recheck is necessary do not check on the same arm immediately after
- If rechecking because the reading is high — let the patient rest for 3–5 mins. at a minimum

Cuff Sizes:

- Small adult - 9–10 in. arm circumference (22–26 cm)
- Standard adult - 11–13 in. arm circumference (27–34 cm)
- Large adult - 14–17 in. arm circumference (35–44 cm)
- Adult thigh - 18–21 in. arm circumference (45–52 cm)

Resources: