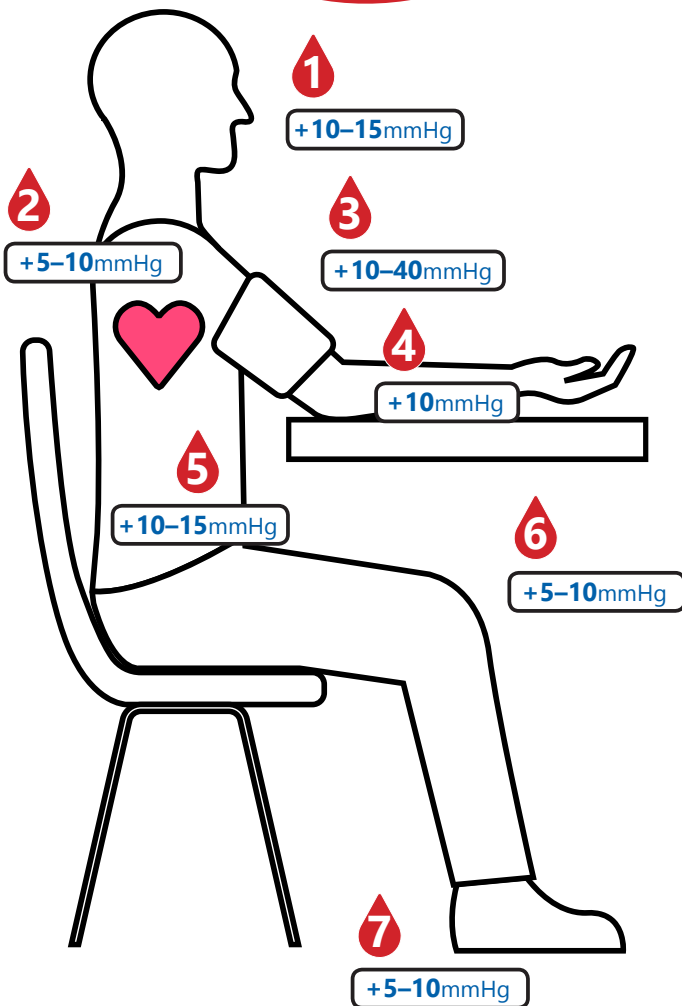


# 7 SIMPLE TIPS

TO GET AN ACCURATE  
BLOOD PRESSURE  
READING

**mmHg**  
(millimeters of mercury—  
a unit of pressure)

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

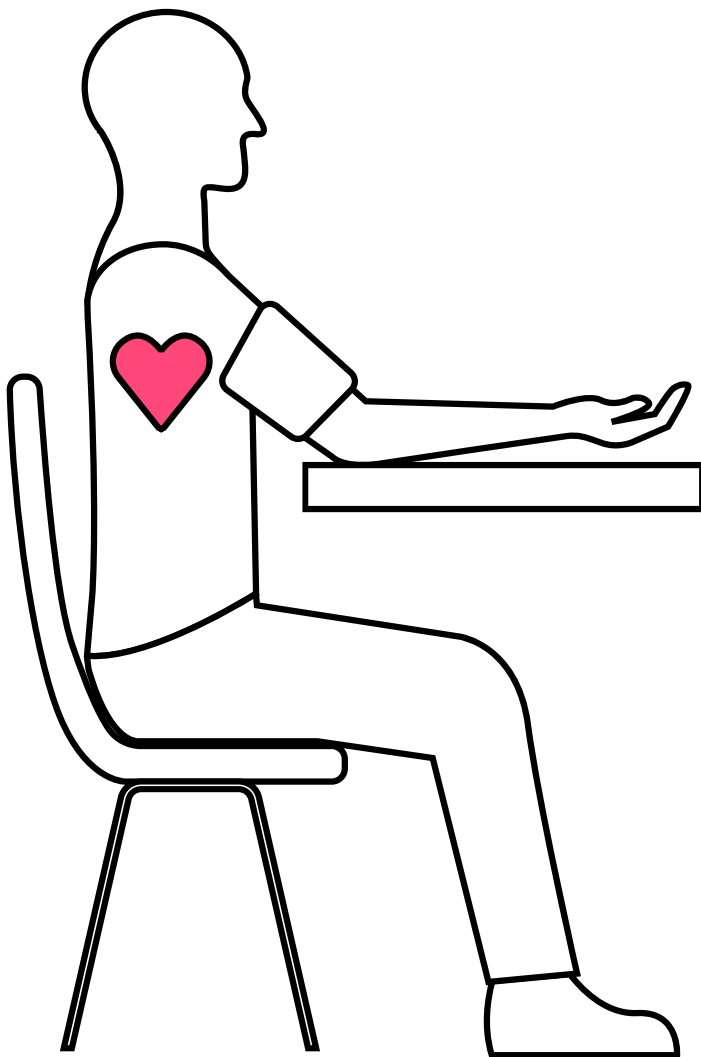


- 1 Don't Have a Conversation**  
Talking adds 10–15mmHg
- 2 Support Back**  
Unsupported back adds 5–10mmHg
- 3 Put Cuff on Bare Arm**  
Cuff over clothing adds 10–40mmHg
- 4 Support Arm at Heart Level**  
Unsupported arm adds 10mmHg
- 5 Empty Bladder**  
Full bladder adds 10–15mmHg
- 6 Keep Legs Uncrossed**  
Crossing legs adds 5–10mmHg
- 7 Support Feet**  
Unsupported feet add 5–10mmHg

**Quality Improvement Organizations**  
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CENTERS FOR MEDICARE & MEDICAID SERVICES

**Quality Insights**

# HOW TO CORRECTLY MEASURE BP



## 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:

- <http://bit.ly/howtomeasurebp>