

## Measuring Blood Pressure at home

Monitoring your blood pressure using a home blood pressure monitor is a useful way of seeing what your blood pressure is like in your daily life. To get accurate readings, it is important to use the right monitor and the right technique. **Make sure that the home blood pressure monitor you choose has been listed as 'clinically validated' for accuracy by the British Hypertension Society.**

There are many different kinds of home blood pressure monitor, but it is easiest to use a monitor that is fully automatic (digital). Choose one that measures your blood pressure at your upper arm, rather than at your wrist or finger. **Upper-arm blood pressure monitors usually give the most accurate and consistent results.** Ask your pharmacist for help to get the **correct size of cuff** for your arm.

### Monitoring blood pressure at home

- Ensure you are **sitting comfortably** for a couple of minutes before starting. Avoid talking or moving whilst taking your blood pressure.
- **Support your arm** at the level of your heart, and ensure no tight clothing constricts the arm.
- **Place the cuff round your arm** as directed in the monitor's instructions.
- Take your blood pressure **two or three times**, leaving at least 1 minute between readings. Record each blood pressure reading.
- Repeat all these steps in the other arm, **but this only needs to be done the once. Whichever arm gives the highest blood pressure readings, this is the arm you will be using for future readings.**
- Repeat the blood pressure readings **twice daily**, ideally morning and evening, for between **4 to 7 days**.
- **Bring the readings with you** when you next see your GP/nurse.
- **During Covid-19 please email the surgery on: reception.k84015@nhs.net**

### Understanding Blood Pressure readings

Blood pressure refers to the force of blood against the walls of the arteries. It is written down as a number eg 120/80mmHg. The first number is the **systolic** pressure, which represents the pressure in the arteries when the heart contracts. The second number is the **diastolic** pressure, which represents the pressure in the arteries when the heart is resting between heart beats.

As blood pressure varies from moment to moment, and also in different individuals, it is impossible to stipulate what a perfect blood pressure should be. However a very general rule of thumb is that **clinic readings should be less than 140/90mmHg**, and **home readings should be less than 135/85mmHg**. By providing your doctor or nurse with your home readings, it is often helpful in deciding how well your blood pressure is controlled, especially if you suffer from 'white coat hypertension' in the clinical setting.

