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Checking your Blood Pressure at Home

To self-check blood pressure accurately, sit upright in a supported chair with feet flat on the floor, legs uncrossed, and arm supported at heart level. Use an automatic upper-arm cuff on bare skin if possible or place the cuff over a thin sleeve.

Preparing for the Measurement

- **Use the Right Tools:** Use an automatic, cuff-style monitor that fits your upper arm, as wrist/finger monitors are less reliable.
- **Rest:** Rest comfortably for about 5 minutes before the measurement.
- **Prepare Your Body:** Empty your bladder and ensure you haven't smoked, exercised, or consumed caffeine in the last 30 minutes.
- **Positioning:** Sit in a chair with your back straight and supported, feet flat on the floor, and legs uncrossed.
- **Arm Placement:** Place your arm on a table so the cuff is at the same level as your heart, with your palm facing up.

Taking the Measurement

1. **Place the Cuff:** Apply the cuff directly against bare skin preferred - not over clothing if this can be avoided, on the upper arm, about 1 inch above the bend of the elbow.
2. **Ensure Proper Fit:** The cuff should be snug but not too tight.
3. **Measure:** Press the start button. Remain still, quiet, and do not talk or use a phone during the reading.
4. **Record:** Write down your top number (systolic), bottom number (diastolic), and pulse rate.
5. **Repeat:** Wait one minute, then take a second reading to ensure accuracy.

Best Practices and Tips

- **Timing:** Take measurements at the same time each day (e.g., morning and evening), ideally before taking medication.
- **Log Results:** Maintain a log to share with your healthcare provider to help them understand your true average blood pressure, rather than relying on one high reading.

Web references:

[CDC and High Blood Pressure](#)
[Baystate Health: How to Check BP at Home, A step-by-step guide](#)
[How to Check Your BP at Home: A YouTube video](#)
[Kaiser Permanente: Checking your BP at Home](#)