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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:** Sit 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 and 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 to two minutes, then take a second reading to ensure accuracy.

Best Practices and Tips

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.

Timing: Take measurements at varying times about three times per week to see an average or a trend in readings.

Use the Blood Pressure Check Logs offered on the [Good Health Outcomes Resource page](#) (immediately below these BP check instructions)

If you wish to buy your own automatic BP cuff, check Amazon. Prices range from between \$25 to as high as about \$70. Find one that looks to be ideal for you. Local pharmacies and grocery stores carry a few options also.

The above information was reviewed and validated by David Campbell-O'Dell, DNP, APRN-IP, FNP-BC, FAANP

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](#)