

HOME BLOOD PRESSURE MONITORING

A home blood pressure monitor tracks your blood pressure between checkups with your primary care provider. Models used by health care professionals require a stethoscope and are usually the most accurate. Most people use an electronic monitor for home use. Here are some tips to keep in mind when you purchase an electronic monitor for home use:

- ❑ **Avoid wrist and finger units—they are not as reliable**
- ❑ **Get a good fit on the cuff—if your arm is too large or too small for the cuff you need to order the correct size cuff or your readings won't be accurate**
- ❑ **Make sure the digital display is large enough for you to read**
- ❑ **If your unit has an inflatable cuff, make sure you can easily “pump” it up**
- ❑ **Ask your health care professional to show you how to get the most accurate reading**
- ❑ **Every six months have your electronic meter checked against a mercury unit at your doctor's office or your local health department**

TIPS FOR TAKING AN ACCURATE BLOOD PRESSURE

- **Rest for 5 minutes before measuring**
- **Do not talk while measuring**
- **Uncross legs and ankles**
- **Avoid caffeine, nicotine, and alcohol for at least 30 minutes before a measurement**
- **Wait 30 minutes after physical activity before you measure**
- **Make sure you have the correct size cuff**
- **Sit comfortably with back supported**
- **Rest your arm on a table that is level with your heart**
- **Wrap the cuff smoothly and snugly around the upper part of your arm, leaving just enough room to slip one finger under the cuff**
- **Be sure the bottom edge of the cuff is an inch above the crease in your elbow**
- **Follow the instructions for recording and measuring your blood pressure according to the directions for the type of monitor you are using**
- **Ask your health care provider how often you should check your blood pressure and what range it should be in**
- **If elevated, wait two minutes and recheck, averaging the two scores**