

## **Simple steps to an accurate reading of your home blood pressure**

There are a few simple steps that you can follow to be sure that you get an accurate reading of your blood pressure.

### **Before you take your blood pressure reading**

1. Many things can make your blood pressure rise for a short time. Make sure you do not need to use the toilet, and that you have not just eaten a big meal. Do not measure your blood pressure within 30 minutes of drinking caffeine or smoking.
2. Wear loose-fitting clothes like a short sleeved t-shirt so that you can push your sleeve up comfortably.
3. Always use the same arm for blood pressure readings, as each arm will give you a slightly different reading. If possible, use the arm that your doctor or nurse uses when measuring your blood pressure.
4. Before you take your readings, rest for five minutes. You should be sitting down in a quiet place, preferably at a desk or table, with your arm resting on a firm surface and your feet flat on the floor.
5. Make sure your arm is supported and that the cuff around your arm is at the same level as your heart. You may need to support your arm with a cushion to be sure it is at the correct height. Your arm should be relaxed, not tensed.

### **How to take your blood pressure using a home blood pressure monitor**

1. Put the cuff on following the instructions that came with your monitor.
2. Make sure you are relaxed and comfortable. If you are anxious or uncomfortable, this will make your blood pressure rise temporarily.
3. When you are taking your reading, keep still and silent. Moving and talking can affect your reading.
4. Take two or three readings, each about two minutes apart, and then work out the average. Some people find that their first reading is much higher than the next readings. If this is true for you, keep taking readings until they level out and stop falling, then use this as your reading.
5. Record your reading, either in the memory of your monitor or on computer or paper.

### **Tips on taking blood pressure readings**

- Do not round your measurements up or down – if you don't keep accurate records of your blood pressure it may affect the treatment you receive.
- Do not be alarmed if you get an unexpected high reading – a one-off reading may be nothing to worry about. Measure your blood pressure again at another time, but if you find that it continues to be high after a period of time, see your doctor or nurse.
- Do not check your blood pressure too often – you may become worried or stressed about small changes in your reading. This can raise your blood pressure in the short-term. Worrying about your blood-pressure reading may actually make it higher.