

- Remember that the purpose of checking your blood pressure at home is to keep a regular record that will help your doctor or nurse decide what treatment, if any, to recommend.
- If you and your doctor or nurse agree that you should check your blood pressure yourself at home, try to do this at the time intervals they suggest.
- Choose a time when you are relatively calm!
- Remember to record your readings!
- Choose a blood pressure machine that provides automatic readings and has been tested for accuracy according to standards of the European Society of Hypertension
- Make sure you have made arrangements to have your blood pressure machine properly checked every year to ensure it is working properly, as it may require to be recalibrated. The Practice cannot do this for you.
- Remember that blood pressure readings fluctuate for all sorts of reasons. So do not panic if your readings go up and down!
- Remember that measuring your blood pressure alone cannot figure out why you may be feeling ill at any particular time – so if you are not well, **be sensible**, visit or call your doctor or nurse so they can diagnose the reason why.



Having your Blood Pressure Measured



How You Can Help

Why measuring your blood pressure is important:

High blood pressure (hypertension) has been termed the '*silent killer*' because it often does not produce any noticeable symptoms. It is a major cause of heart disease and stroke, both of which are among the leading causes of death and disability.

Why accuracy in blood pressure measurement is important:

Our blood pressure naturally fluctuates throughout the day in response to activity, mood, body position etc, and many things may give rise to an inaccurate reading. This in turn could mean that you might be given a medicine you do not really need, or you might not be given the medicine you **do** need.

Things that can distort or affect your blood pressure reading:

if you are, for example, anxious or in a hurry, this will affect the readings. Some people even have what is called the '*White Coat Syndrome*': for them the mere idea of a doctor or nurse in uniform can put their blood pressure up.

The doctor or nurse may check your blood pressure in both arms as it can vary between the two.

There are some simple things you can do before your appointment which will help your doctor or nurse get an accurate reading.



Before your appointment you can help by:

- Wearing short sleeves if possible.
- Trying to arrive in good time so that you can sit quietly and relax for at least 5 minutes beforehand.
- Avoid having a heavy meal, coffee, tea, other caffeine-based drinks or alcohol, or smoking, for 30 minutes before your appointment.
- Going to the toilet beforehand: a full bladder does not help!

During your appointment you can help by:

- Sitting comfortably with your back well-supported, with legs uncrossed and feet flat on the floor.
- Being as still and calm as you can. Try not to clench your fists or jaw.
- Resisting the urge to chat with the doctor or nurse!

Measuring your blood pressure yourself - being sensible!

If you have concern about your blood pressure, you may want to consider measuring it regularly yourself at home. This can be more convenient, mean taking less time off work, and you might be more relaxed. Thus, if taken regularly, your readings might give a more consistent picture than those taken from time to time at the Practice. You should discuss this with your doctor or nurse, but these are further points to note: