

Home Blood Pressure Monitoring

Your Practice Nurse/GP has asked you to record your blood pressure for the next 7 days, this leaflet is to help you do that, but if you have any questions please call the surgery for advice.

What is Blood Pressure?

You need a certain amount of pressure in your arteries to keep the blood flowing around your body. This is called blood pressure and relates to the pressure of the blood in your arteries. Your heart pumps your blood around the body and this pressure varies at different times in the heartbeat cycle.

- Systolic blood pressure is the highest level your blood pressure reaches. This occurs when your heart contracts and blood is forced through the arteries.
- Diastolic blood pressure is the lowest level your blood pressure reaches when your heart relaxes between each beat.
- Your blood pressure is written as two numbers, for example 120/80mmHg. The first number is the systolic pressure and the second is the diastolic pressure. ('mmHg' is the unit used for measuring blood pressure; it stands for millimetres of mercury.)

What does high blood pressure mean?

High blood pressure greatly increases your risk of heart attack or stroke.

If high blood pressure is left untreated for a long time, it can lead to some serious health problems like kidney failure and even damage to your sight. High blood pressure develops if the walls of the larger arteries lose their natural elasticity and become rigid, and if the smaller blood vessels become narrower. This can also make the heart muscle abnormally thick and stiffer, a condition called 'left ventricular hypertrophy', which causes the heart to become enlarged. This can lead to heart failure.

If your blood pressure is 140/90mmHg or above you may have high blood pressure.

It could be caused by a number of risk factors, including not doing enough physical activity, being overweight or obese, having too much salt in your diet or drinking too much alcohol.

It can be genetic. If one or both of your parents have or had high blood pressure you could have a higher chance of developing it too. A rare cause of high blood pressure involves the narrowing of an artery to a kidney, or an abnormal production of hormones from the adrenal glands. Severe kidney disease can also cause high blood pressure.

Some medicines, like oral contraceptives and alternative remedies can cause a rise in blood pressure. If you're concerned that any medicine or remedy might affect your blood pressure, ask your doctor or pharmacist about it.

Taking your blood pressure

Please record your blood pressure for the next 7 days. Please do this **TWICE DAILY**, for example morning and afternoon, taking TWO readings on each occasion. Write down the **lowest** set of values, recording it in the chart below which gives an example. For best results please follow the tips below:-

- Make sure you don't need the toilet
- Leave 30 minutes after caffeine (tea, coffee, coca cola)
- Wear loose fitting clothes
- Always use the same arm to record your blood pressure
- Rest for 5 mins in a quiet room before taking your reading
- Rest your arm on a table for example
- Keep your arm relaxed and don't move or speak whilst your blood pressure is recording.

Name: **DOB:** **Date Blood Pressure FIRST taken:**

		<u>Example</u>	<u>Day 1</u>	<u>Day 2</u>	<u>Day 3</u>	<u>Day 4</u>	<u>Day 5</u>	<u>Day 6</u>	<u>Day 7</u>
AM Reading	Systolic (Upper)	146							
	Diastolic (Lower)	94							
PM Reading	Systolic (Upper)	152							
	Diastolic (Lower)	87							