

# How to check your blood pressure

Blood pressure is the force of blood as it moves from your heart through your blood vessels. Your doctor may ask you to check your blood pressure at home. This handout tells you how to take a blood pressure reading with a digital monitor.

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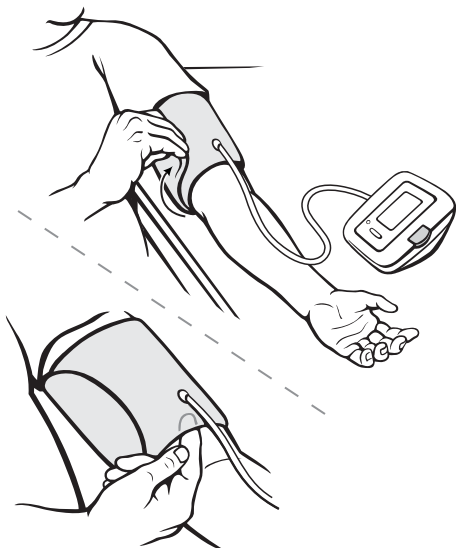
## Before you check your blood pressure



- Find a quiet place near a table to check your blood pressure.
  - Put the blood pressure monitor on the table.
  - Sit in a chair next to the table and rest for 5 to 10 minutes.
  - Your arm should rest comfortably at heart level. Rest it on the table if possible.
  - Roll up your sleeve if you have a shirt on. Make sure the sleeve is not tight around your arm. A bare arm is best.
  - Sit up straight with your back against the chair. Do not cross your legs.
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## **Taking your blood pressure**

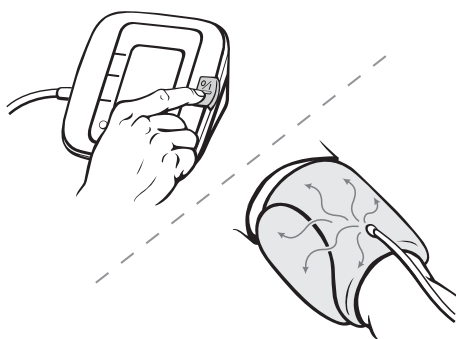
**Wrap the cuff around your arm.**



- The blood pressure cuff needs to fit right for a correct reading.
- Put your arm on the table, palm side up.
- Make sure your arm is level with your heart.
- Wrap the cuff around your arm on bare skin. Do not wrap the cuff over your clothes.
- Wrap the cuff around your arm just above your elbow. The fit should be snug but not too tight or too loose. You should be able to slip one finger under the cuff when it is on your arm.
- If the cuff is too loose or too tight, your reading will be wrong.

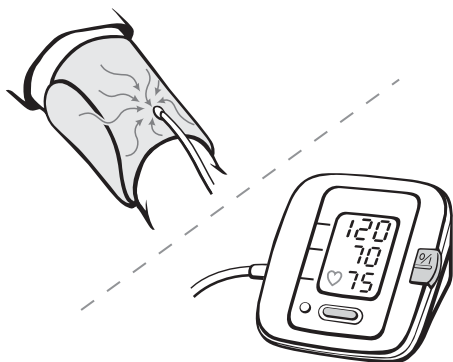
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**Inflate the cuff.**



- Make sure you follow the instructions that come with your blood pressure monitor.
- Push the button on the monitor to inflate the cuff.
- Stay still and do not talk while the monitor takes your blood pressure.

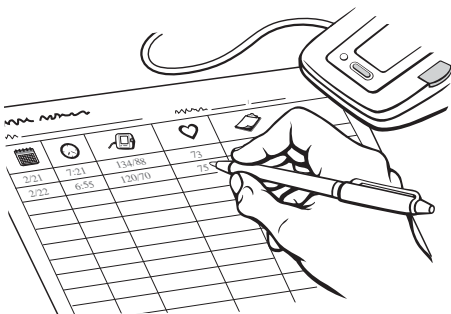
### Allow the cuff to deflate.



- Let the cuff deflate all the way.
- Your blood pressure reading should show on the monitor.
- Some monitors also show your heart rate.
- Take the cuff off your arm.

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### Record your results.



- Write down your blood pressure readings in a diary.
- Write down the date and time that you took the reading.
- See the handout **Blood pressure diary (Illustrated)**.
- Take your diary with you when you go to the doctor.

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### Helpful tips

- Wait 30 minutes after you smoke, drink caffeine, or exercise before checking your blood pressure.
- Use the same arm each time you take a reading.

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This information is general in nature and may not apply to you or your condition. Talk to your doctor or nurse about how to best use this information and how to take care of your medical condition. Be sure to ask your doctor or nurse any questions you might have. This information sheet is not intended to provide or replace professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment.

**Patient or Caregiver:**

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Nurse:**

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_