

Make Sure Your Blood Pressure Reading Is Correct!



Take these actions to improve the accuracy of your blood pressure readings.

Try to take your blood pressure readings at the same time every day and take at least two readings, one or two minutes apart.

Before Your Reading:

Avoid caffeine/tobacco
30 MINUTES PRIOR.

EMPTY your bladder.

Sit calmly for at least
5 MINUTES with arm support and back at rest.

KEEP A LOG of your readings and bring it to every check-up.

During Your Reading:

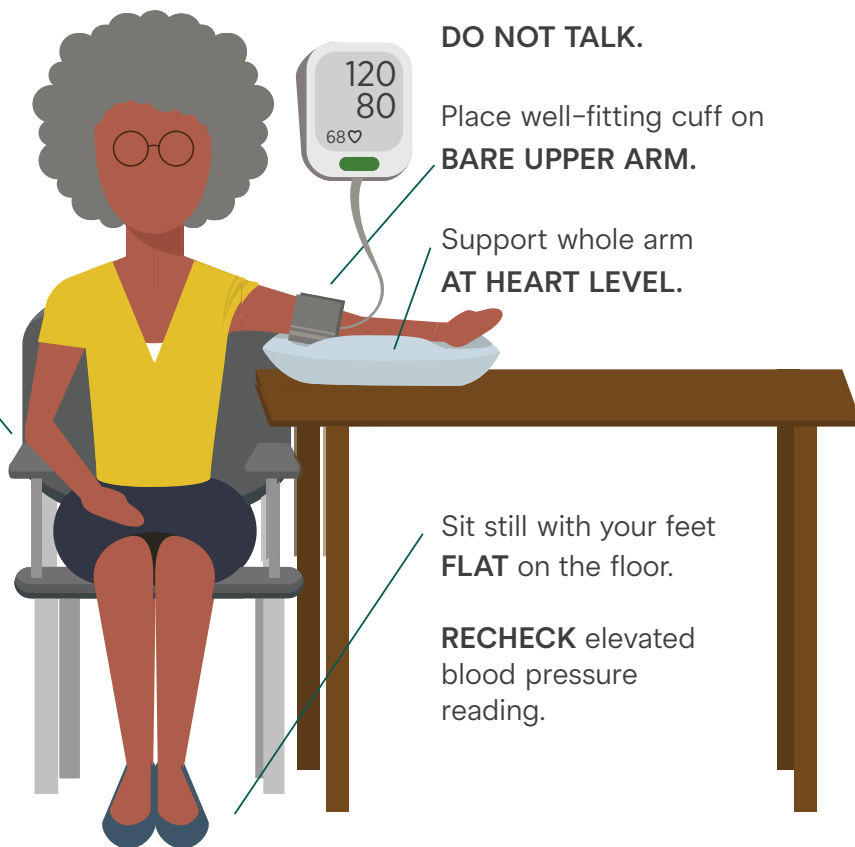
DO NOT TALK.

Place well-fitting cuff on
BARE UPPER ARM.

Support whole arm
AT HEART LEVEL.

Sit still with your feet
FLAT on the floor.

RECHECK elevated blood pressure reading.






Blood Pressure Basics

Your blood pressure is expressed as one number over another number. The **top number** (systolic blood pressure or **SBP**) is the pressure in your arteries when the heart contracts/beats. The **bottom number** (diastolic blood pressure or **DBP**) is the pressure when your heart rests between beats.

Each of these actions can affect your blood pressure reading:

ACTION	May INCREASE Your Reading By:
Not using bare arm	+5 to +50 mm Hg SBP
Not resting for 5 minutes prior to BP measurement	+10 to +20 mm Hg SBP
Recent use of tobacco/caffeine	+6 to +11 mm Hg SBP +5 mm Hg DBP
Arm not supported at heart level	+1 to +7 mm Hg SBP +5 to +11 mm Hg DBP
Cuff too small	+8 to +10 mm Hg SBP +2 to +8 Hg DBP
Patient sitting without back support	+6 to +10 mm Hg SBP
Full bladder	+ 5 mm Hg to +10 mm Hg SBP +3 to +7 mm Hg DBP
Legs crossed	+8 mm Hg SBP +6 mm Hg DBP
Talking	+7 mm Hg SBP +8 mm Hg DBP

Blood Pressure Levels as Defined by the American Academy of Family Physicians

	BLOOD PRESSURE CATEGORY	SYSTOLIC mm Hg (upper number)	and/or	DIASTOLIC mm Hg (lower number)
	NORMAL	LESS THAN 130	and	LESS THAN 80
	BORDERLINE HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE	130–139	or	80–89
	HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE (HYPERTENSION)	140 OR HIGHER	or	90 OR HIGHER