

NEPHROLOGY ASSOCIATES OF MICHIGAN

HOME BLOOD PRESSURE MONITORING

Patient Instructions

Purchasing Home Blood Pressure Units

Electronic home blood pressure units are the preferred machines to purchase because:

- They do not require a stethoscope
- They are easy to use and very durable

There are many manufacturers and models; **however, we highly recommend a fully automatic model with an upper arm cuff based on a long term history of reliability and accuracy with this product.** The wrist and finger units, although easy to use, are not reliable for monitoring blood pressure.

The fully automatic units will:

- Inflate measure and display blood pressure readings with the push of a button.
- They are simple to use
- Average cost is \$40 to \$100 (price check from Walgreens) depending on the model.

Manufacturer:

One of the major manufacturers in the United States with a good track record and reputation is **Omron**. Although this brand may be a little more expensive than others, we feel it's worth the extra cost if it is in your budget. This manufacturer is FDA approved and therefore has proven accuracy and reliability.

Cuff Size:

The proper sized cuff is very important for accurate measurements. **Purchasing a cuff that is too small for your arm will result in falsely elevated readings.** It is better to purchase a slightly larger cuff rather than too small of a cuff. If you have a large upper arm, purchase a large blood pressure cuff. Omron offers both large and regular sized cuffs for their machines; however they may need to be purchased directly from the manufacturer.

Correct blood pressure measurement:

Blood pressure measurements consist of two numbers, the first (higher) number is called the systolic blood pressure and the second (lower) number is the diastolic blood pressure. An example of a blood pressure reading is 130/80. Normal values will vary from person to person depending on your medical history and other factors. **Ask your doctor what your target blood pressure should be.**

Many factors can affect your blood pressure readings and readings can change throughout the day or night. Factors that can increase blood pressures include:

- Pain
- When you are upset
- Immediately after exercise (even walking)
- While we are talking
- Smoking
- Immediately after caffeine usage

The correct measurement technique is outlined below:

- Avoid caffeine, cigarettes, and alcohol for 30 minutes before the measurement
- Measure your blood pressure when you first wake up and before dinner (unless directed otherwise by your doctor)
- Always sit in a chair with a back on it for 3-5 minutes, without talking, before measuring your blood pressure
- Have paper and pencil ready to record your results for your doctor
- Use the correct sized cuff for your arm
- Position the cuff in the proper position by placing the indicator or tubing on the body side (inside) of the elbow
- Keep your arm at heart level while measuring, preferably by resting your arm on a table in a comfortable position.
- If your blood pressure is elevated you may repeat the reading and record the lowest of the two readings
- Always measure your blood pressure on the first day of every month both in the morning and evening (unless advised differently by your doctor).

Keep in mind your home blood pressure may be lower than while at your doctor's office. This is because you are more relaxed at home.