



A GUIDE FOR ACCURATE BLOOD PRESSURE READINGS...

A Report by Health Matrix

Keep in mind that certain factors can cause blood pressure to rise temporarily. Below is a list of things to keep in mind while checking your blood pressure.

- You should rest quietly and comfortably for 3-5 minutes prior to taking your blood pressure. Activities, such as exercise or eating, will affect your reading negatively.
- Wear short sleeves or be able to pull up your clothes so your arm is exposed.
- Go to the bathroom to empty your bladder first. A full bladder can impact your reading negatively.
- Your palm should be facing up and your arm should be supported and horizontal at the level of the midpoint of your sternum or chest bone. Which is at the approximate level of the right atrium of your heart. Blood pressure readings are elevated significantly when the arm is hanging down or unsupported.
- Sit comfortably with your legs uncrossed, feet flat on the floor, with your back and arm supported to avoid higher readings. How many times have you had your blood pressure taken while sitting on the exam table with your back and arms unsupported, legs dangling down, and arms hanging down by your side?
- When you are cold, your blood pressure tends to rise because your blood vessels constrict.
- Stress and anxiety can cause muscle tension which can increase your blood pressure. Try to relax.
- Talking to the clinician or people around you while taking your blood pressure will negatively impact your readings.

- Drugs such as nicotine and caffeine (coffee, tea, sodas, etc.) will temporarily increase your blood pressure, so avoid these for at least 60 minutes before having your blood pressure taken.
- Though you should always be hydrated you can go overboard on water intake relatively by drinking more than 96 ounces of water daily. This can overwork the kidneys which can increase blood pressure. One approach, is to divide your body weight by 2, and aim to drink that amount daily in ounces. For instance, a 140-pound person should consume about 70 ounces of water daily.
- **KEEP IN MIND:** *When checking your blood pressure the cuff position is very important. The lower edge of the cuff should be about 1 inch or two finger widths above the bend of your elbow. Anywhere above this will result in higher readings and likewise anywhere below this will result in lower readings.*
- **NOTE:** *If you are already on hypertensive medications, your blood pressure readings may vary depending on what time of the day you take your drugs. Whenever you record your blood pressure, also note what time you took your medications.*