



PROPER BLOOD PRESSURE MONITORING

Blood Pressure Monitor Size and Placement

- Choose a proper size arm cuff! You should be able to slide one finger under the cuff. Too small a cuff overestimates the measurement and too large underestimates the reading. The error can be as much as 30 mmHg.
- The lower edge of the cuff should be 1 (one) inch above the elbow.
- Wrist and finger monitors are not as accurate as cuff monitors and are not well suited for a clinical setting.

Before Taking the Blood Pressure

- Have the resident sit at rest for 5 (five) minutes with his/her upper arm at heart level.
- Encourage the resident to sit as upright as possible with feet flat on the floor. Do not let them cross feet or ankles.
- Roll up the head of the bed of bedfast residents if possible.
- Wait a half hour after meals or exercising to take the blood pressure to get the most accurate reading.
- Nicotine and caffeine can acutely affect blood pressure. Therefore, wait 30 minutes after nicotine use and a couple of hours after caffeine use.

Proper Technique of the Best Reading

- Roll up the resident's sleeve or remove any tight-sleeved clothing.
- Rest the arm on a table or other hard surface with the palm up. For residents in bed, support the arm with a pillow. DO NOT allow the arm to dangle.
- Discourage the resident from talking.
- For the MOST accurate measurement...take three readings 1 (one) minute apart and average them. This is especially important if the resident has unstable blood pressure and is receiving an antihypertensive with "HOLD" medication perimeters.
- Blood pressure may vary from one arm to another. Recommend that both arms are checked and the higher reading is recorded.

WHAT DO BLOOD PRESSURE NUMBERS MEAN?

Readings from the blood pressure monitor show how hard the resident's heart is working to maintain blood flow through the body.

Systolic Pressure

This number represents the amount of pressure as the heart pumps.

Diastolic Pressure

This number represents the amount of pressure in the blood vessels between heart beats.

NATIONAL INSTITUTES of HEALTH HYPERTENSION GUIDELINES**

Normal: Less than 120/80

Prehypertension: 120-139/80-89

Stage 1 hypertension: 140-159/90-99

Stage 2 hypertension: 160 and above/100 and above

****National Institutes of Health. National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute. The seventh report of the Joint National Committee on Prevention, Evaluation, and Treatment of High Blood Pressure.**