



# CHECKING YOUR OWN Blood Pressure at Home



**'White Coat Syndrome'**  
= showing higher than usual blood pressure when with a doctor.



**'Masked Hypertension'**  
= showing normal blood pressure with a doctor but having high blood pressure at other times.



**Home Monitoring**  
is a powerful tool for avoiding the misleading results from these two effects.

## Getting a Reliable Reading

- ❌ Don't check blood pressure when you're nervous or in a rush.
- ✅ Same time every day.
- ✅ Before you take medications.
- ✅ Before you bathe.
- ✅ After you've used the toilet.
- ✅ At least 2 hours after heavy activity.
- ✅ At least 30 minutes after smoking.
- ✅ At least 30 minutes after caffeine.
- ✅ Sit and rest for 5 minutes before taking a reading.

### GOOD BACK SUPPORT

CALM, UNHURRIED STATE OF MIND

### CORRECTLY-SIZED CUFF

2 FINGERS SHOULD BE ABLE TO FIT SNUGLY UNDER CUFF

BARE ARM OR THIN SLEEVE

CUFFS WILL HAVE MARKINGS THAT GO ALONG INSIDE OF ARM

ARM WELL-SUPPORTED AT HEART LEVEL

Keep a log of your readings over time.

Automated monitoring devices do not require a bulb to inflate cuff.

FEET FLAT ON THE FLOOR

LEGS UNCROSSED

## Taking your readings...

Once you have properly prepared and have your monitor in place and turned on, take a reading:

- 1 **Push the 'start' button to take a reading.**  
Note, if you have a semi-automated reader, then you will first have to rapidly squeeze the bulb with your opposite hand to tighten the cuff.
- 2 **Sit quietly while the device takes its reading.**
- 3 **Record the result.**  
Even if your device stores readings, you should keep a written log.
- 4 **Wait 1 minute, then repeat.** (Also wait and repeat if you have any readings with errors.)

### UNDERSTANDING Your Numbers

120/80 (OR LOWER) **LOW RISK**

121-139/80-89 **MEDIUM RISK**

140/90 (OR HIGHER) **ELEVATED RISK**

**Diabetics:** Elevated Risk is a BP above 130/80

These are general instructions. Always read and follow the exact directions that came with your monitoring device.

Home blood pressure monitoring can help you get reliable blood pressure values and keep you aware of this aspect of your health. You can find home blood pressure monitors in drugstores, pharmacies and department stores.

Learn more about the importance of managing your blood pressure at:

[pwc.ottawaheart.ca/awareness](http://pwc.ottawaheart.ca/awareness)