Checking your own Blood Pressure at Home

Getting a Reliable Reading

1. Don’t check blood pressure when you’re nervous or in a rush.
2. Same time every day.
3. Before you take medications.
4. Before you bathe.
5. After you’ve used the toilet.
6. At least 2 hours after heavy activity.
7. At least 30 minutes after smoking.
8. At least 30 minutes after caffeine.
9. Sit and rest for 5 minutes before taking a reading.

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.)

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

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

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