



SELECTING BLOOD PRESSURE MONITORS FOR HOME USE April 7, 2015

Types of Home Blood Pressure Monitors

Today, most pharmacies, medical supply stores and some Internet sites sell home blood pressure monitors. All monitors have the same basic parts — an inflatable cuff or strap, a gauge for readings, and sometimes a stethoscope, depending on the type of monitor you choose.

- Stethoscope.** Some blood pressure monitors come with a stethoscope. It is used to listen to the sounds your blood makes as it flows through the artery in the crook of your elbow. However, without proper training, it is difficult to interpret those sounds.
- Digital devices.** Digital monitors have a cuff and a gauge that records the pressure. The cuff automatically inflates at the touch of a button. These devices automatically calculate heart rate and check your blood pressure while the cuff deflates. Some even give you an error message if you are not wearing the cuff properly. Digital monitors also deflate automatically.

AHA Recommendation: The American Heart Association recommends an **automatic, cuff-style, bicep (upper-arm) monitor**. Wrist and finger monitors are not recommended because they yield less reliable readings.

Making Sure the Device is Accurate

Before starting routine blood pressure checks, ask the healthcare professional for advice in selecting and using the correct device to monitor and measure your blood pressure. It is important to bring the monitor into a doctor's office to test it against a known, accurate instrument.

Tips to follow when shopping for a blood pressure monitor.

- Choose A Monitor Made For Home Use.** Make sure the monitor has been tested, validated and approved by organizations such as the Association for the Advancement of Medical Instrumentation, the British Hypertension Society and the International Protocol for the Validation of Automated BP Measuring Devices.
- Make sure the cuff fits.** Children and adults with smaller or larger than average-sized arms may need special-sized cuffs. Measure around your upper arm and choose a monitor that comes with the correct size cuff

Source: http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/Conditions/HighBloodPressure/High-Blood-Pressure-or-Hypertension_UCM_002020_SubHomePage.jsp

Updated: November 2016