

Medical Device Readings

It is becoming commonplace to use devices to perform blood pressure checks, pulses, pulse oximetry, glucometers, weight and the like. For such a device to be effective –

The device must be checked regularly to assure that it is operating properly.

AND

All staff operating the device must know what readings require medical intervention.

Whether there is a need for medical attention or the device requires calibration, any time there is a reading that is too high or too low, further action is required.

If we are to rely on medical devices, then we must know that they are providing accurate readings and that they are functioning properly

Is there a problem with the person's health or the device?

If the person is not in distress, i.e. is doing well, and there is a reading that is too high or too low, then the problem *may* be the machine/device.

Example: Blood Pressure Devices: If the blood pressure reading is 47/23 there is a problem. Either the individual is in serious medical trouble or the reading is an error. If the person is alert, communicating normally, and moving normally, it is an indication that the reading may be off and the device needs to be checked.

Example: Glucometer: If the individual appears to be clinically well and the glucometer reads "12" there is a problem with the device.

**If a reading is too high or too low and you suspect a medical problem –
Seek medical attention immediately!**

Example: Weight Scales: Gaining or losing weight can be significant to an individual's health. When the measured weight goes up and down 10-20 pounds from day to day or week to week, it is likely that the scale needs recalibrating.

Check and Recalibrate the Device

If you suspect a "home" device is not accurate, check it according to the manufacturer's directions and have it recalibrated, if necessary.

Once you know the device is reasonably accurate, it is important to pay attention to it and to report significant changes to Nurses and Physicians.