

SELECTING BLOOD PRESSURE MONITORS FOR HOME USE

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 readouts, 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.
 - **Digital Arm Devices** are the most accurate.
 - **Digital Wrist Monitors** are useful when an arm cuff is too small or because the person experiences too much pain from the pressure of the inflated cuff.
 - **Digital Finger Devices** are not recommended.

MAKING SURE THE DEVICE IS ACCURATE

Before starting routine blood pressure checks at home or in a group home, it is important to bring the monitor into a doctor's office to test it against a known, accurate instrument.

It is also a good idea to redo the test every year.

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 the Association for the Advancement of Medical Instrumentation, the British Hypertension Society and the International Protocol for the Validation of Automated BP Measuring Devices.
- 🌀 **ENSURE THE MONITOR IS SUITABLE FOR PEOPLE WITH SPECIAL NEEDS.** When selecting a blood pressure monitor for the elderly, pregnant women or children, make sure it has been validated for these conditions.
- 🌀 **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.