Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center

PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

How To Monitor Your Blood Pressure at Home

This information explains how to monitor your blood pressure at home as part of your care at MSK. Your care team will give you information about how to set up and use the blood pressure machine they provide you.

The blood pressure measurements you take at home will help your care team make decisions about your care. They can help them diagnose high blood pressure. They also can use your home blood pressure measurements to adjust your blood pressure medications, if needed.

Before you start, you should already have set up your blood pressure monitor device. Follow the instructions you were given.

Before using your blood pressure monitoring device

Before taking your reading:

- Quietly rest in a seated position for at least 5 minutes.

- Make sure your blood pressure monitor is at the same level as your heart.
- Make sure your legs are uncrossed and your back is straight.

Use your blood pressure monitor device to take a blood pressure reading.

Review your results

See how your blood pressure reading matches the chart below (see Figure 1).

Figure 8. Blood pressure chart

Figure 1. Blood pressure chart

When to call your healthcare provider

Follow the instructions your nurse gave you. Your care team may have told you to call them if you have new or worsening symptoms, such as feeling:

- Dizzy
- Feeling lightheaded
- Chest pain
- Shortness of breath
- Heart palpitations (feeling your heart is beating fast and hard)
- Swelling in your legs, ankles, or feet
- A cough
- Changes in your blood pressure or heart rate

Important information

- Your cardiologist (heart doctor) and other members of your care team will give you instructions. They will tell you how often and when you should measure your blood pressure at home.
- Your care team will not look at your results at the same time you send them. You must call your cardiologist's office to tell them about any change that needs attention right away.

- Your care team will look at your blood pressure readings at various times.
- If you have questions, please contact your cardiologist's office.
- You are the only person who should use your blood pressure monitoring device. Please do not share it with family members or friends.

If you have questions or concerns, contact your healthcare provider. A member of your care team will answer Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Outside those hours, you can leave a message or talk with another MSK provider. There is always a doctor or nurse on call. If you're not sure how to reach your healthcare provider, call 212-639-2000.

For more resources, visit www.mskcc.org/pe to search our virtual library.

How To Monitor Your Blood Pressure at Home - Last updated on January 31, 2025

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